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HISTORY MAGAZINE

The Beaver

JUNE | JULY 2001 \$4.95

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Urban Legend

*The tunnels of
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Disaster at Sea

*The Great
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The Beaver

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On the cover: Bernice Jordan, dancer, at Montreal's Cafe St. Michel, late 1940s. Detail of photo from the Concordia University Archives Jazz Holdings. Colouration by Ray Phillips.

Letters

Call for amnesty

I AM COMPLETING A SHORT FAMILY ALLEGORY regarding my uncle, Ernest Brown, who came to Canada at the beginning of the last century. He had joined the Royal Navy about 1908, and during a training cruise to Halifax, jumped ship with several other crew members and disappeared into the interior. After working at various forestry camps along and through the Ottawa valley, he finally arrived in Timmins, Ontario, where he worked at a gold mine as the camp cook. Apparently, at the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, the Canadian government issued an amnesty on behalf of both countries to the many similar deserters who had disappeared into the Canadian countryside. My uncle apparently responded (with a contrite heart) and subsequently rejoined the Canadian navy. He served for the remainder of the war principally as a crew member on HMCS *Niobe*.

I am wondering if any of your readers know of this amnesty: if it is true and if I could obtain a record or copy of the actual details. I would also like to know how many people took advantage of it and indeed any other details that may be of interest. I would be pleased to hear from anyone regarding my request.

Stanley Marris
Rothesay, New Brunswick
E-mail: marris@nb.sympatico.ca

The Beaver welcomes readers' comments. E-mail us at cnhs@historysociety.ca or write to *The Beaver*, 478-167 Lombard Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3B 0T6. Please include your address and day-time phone number. Letters may be edited for clarity or length.

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Slocum's choice

THE INTERESTING ACCOUNT of the voyage of the *Tilikum* [April/May 2001] misses an opportunity to beat a small but legitimate drum for this country. The heading and text of the article both refer to the first person to sail alone around the world as "the American Joshua Slocum." Slocum, of course, was born in Canada and spent at least the first sixteen years of his life in and around Nova Scotia. At the age of twelve, he ran away from farm life to apprentice to fishermen on the Bay of Fundy and to be near his prime passion—the sea. At sixteen, he worked his way across the Atlantic on a full-rigged sailing ship, and thus launched what was to become a long and varied career as a master mariner. Although he became an American citizen, he retained a real affection for his native land. The opening lines in his famous book *Sailing Alone Around the World* tell it all: "The people of this [Fundy] coast, hardy, robust and strong, are disposed to compete in the world's commerce, and it is nothing against the master mariner if the birthplace mentioned in his certificate be Nova Scotia."

H.W. (Pat) Patterson
Willowdale, Ontario

EDITOR'S NOTE

Joshua Slocum was both a Canadian and an American, the former by accident of birth, the latter by conscious decision. Though, as Mr. Patterson notes, the mariner paid service to his Canadian roots in the opening lines of his memoir, he nevertheless appears to have made deliberate attempts to break with his Canadian past. In *Alone at Sea: The Adventures of Joshua Slocum* (Doubleday, 1998) Ann Spencer observes that Slocum changed the spelling of his surname from Slocombe to make it appear more American; he declared San Francisco his hailing port, and around 1865 became a naturalized American. As well, he made his famous 1895-1898 around-the-world voyage in the *Spray* under the Stars and Stripes. As Slocum is dead and cannot claim a preference, declaring his citizenship to be one or the other may depend on sentiment.

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Metaphor alert

I'D LIKE TO EXPRESS what a pleasure it was to read Susan Mann's gendered reading of Canadian history ["Love, Gender, and Canadian History," February/March 2001]. However, I wasn't quite convinced by her conclusion, since she never seems to abandon a heterosexual framework for the political relationship between French and English Canada, embodied in the idea of marriage.

As the Acadian writer Antoinette Maillet once noted, in the French language, both Canada (le Canada) and Québec (le Québec) are male—as opposed to Acadia (l'Acadie), which is female. Thus, any future relationship between the two would appear to have to be homosexual, or at least homosocial, forcing us to jettison metaphors such as marriage. Of course, the other possibility is that we would have to go beyond traditional categories of male and female and embrace some hybrid gender.

Albert Braz
Kingston, Ontario

Love & the male historian

IN "LOVE, GENDER, AND CANADIAN HISTORY" [Explorations, February/March 2001], Susan Mann asks: "What male historians have burrowed into the public archives and come up with a love story?" Peter Waite, whose article on the love letters of John Thompson you print on page 24 of this same issue, is one. I am another. I suggest she look at *A Love Story from 19th Century Quebec: The Diary of George Stephen Jones* (Peterborough: Broadview, 1989), which I edited, and *Courtship, Love and Marriage in Nineteenth Century English Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), which I wrote. She might also want to explain why she thinks male historians aren't interested in love stories.

Peter Ward
Vancouver, B.C.

Not every picture tells a story

I'VE NEVER DECIDED WHETHER TO BE AMUSED OR AMAZED at C.W. Jefferys's idea of a *fille du roi* [February/March 2001, p. 22]. He certainly was no historian. But Brickdale (p. 12) was even worse. Considering the regard in which the lower class was held in those days, I can't imagine the hierarchy awaiting the arrival of a group of poor girls on a slippery quay (unless they had been informed that somewhere in midocean they had been transformed, perhaps by a fairy godmother, into ladies of the court of Louis XIV and that the same godmother had provided a coiffeuse en route). Those pictures, held in the National Archives of Canada, don't contribute towards the comprehension of history.

Margaret MacDougall, Jonquière, Quebec

ERRATA

It has been brought to our attention that "October Crisis: Singular Anomaly" [Explorations, October/November 2000] contained some errors of fact. In actuality, James Cross was British trade commissioner and lived in Montreal. In the April 1970 election, the Parti Québécois won seven of 108 seats and 23 percent of the vote. As well, the number of deaths attributed to the FLQ prior to the Crisis remains uncertain, with some sources reporting two deaths, others reporting five.

It's all Greek to me

WHILE I AGREE IN PRINCIPLE with Robert Bringhurst's exhortation to learn a North American language, I wish that he had given us a little help here ["Native Canada's Literary History," February/March 2001]. These languages were transliterated into the Roman alphabet. One would expect the transcribers to have used a phonetic spelling, but pronunciation remains elusive. Here, for example, we are presented with a man's name: *Skaay*. Five letters, looks easy, and yet ... Should we pronounce it like the English word *say*, but drawled out, as *Ska-a-a-a-y*? Or does each vowel get sounds, as *Ska-a-y*? And what of *Kilchawigins*? Or *Qquuna*?

The North American languages live—if that is the right word—for most of us today in place names, names of peoples, or the occasional personal name. Of all these tongues, those of the Pacific Coast have always seemed to me the most difficult to pronounce, closest, perhaps, to the Oriental in their use of inflection and of sounds not often formed by the European mouth. I mean *Saskatchewan* and *Wetaskiwin* are real mouthfuls. But *Gitksan* and *Qquuna* seem next to impossible.

J. Pasnak
Edmonton, Alberta

Under wraps

UNTIL I READ "Controlling Customs" [February/March 2001], I thought that bundling was a uniquely Orcadian custom, for I had not heard of the practice anywhere else. It died out in Orkney too sometime in the nineteenth century, probably as a result of religious influence.

The origin of the name is not absolutely clear to me, but I think it may refer to the binding of the young lady. In preparation, and for extra protection, her mother would wrap her tightly with cloth from waist to ankle. Bundling always took place in the girl's home. As so many of our people went to Canada in the early days, it is not surprising that they would have introduced some of our more enlightened and civilized customs.

Len Wilson
Kirkwall, Orkney,
United Kingdom

All in fun

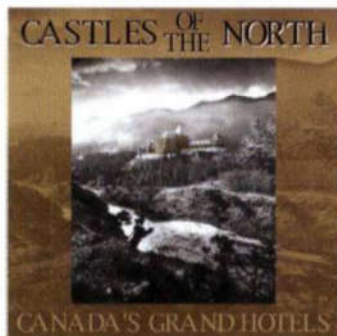
AS A TEENAGER in the 1930s, in the village of Hali-burton, Ontario, *shivaree* was a word in oral, not written, vocabulary. It meant a custom more similar to later Halloween pranks and did *not* imply disapproval of the wedding. The evening after a wedding, we would all create a boisterous display outside the house of the newlyweds until we were bought off with candies, etc. This seems a considerable dilution of Upper Canadian customs as described in the February/March 2001 issue. It is interesting that the tradition came from New France and was spelt *charivari*, and a century or two later was alive but modified in rural Ontario.

J. Bruce Frain
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Quick! Name Arthur Hailey's 1965 bestseller!

If you answered *Hotel*, you're permitted to read on, because the rest of this item is about hotels—grand hotels, that is, in the Hailey manner, but not set in New Orleans as Hailey's fictional St. Gregory Hotel was. We're talking about Canada's grand hotels, the ones with the hipped roofs, pointed dormers, turrets, bay windows, and balconies, the names of which are sometimes preceded by the very apt word *château*, as in Château Frontenac. Such structures as Victoria's Empress Hotel, Banff's Banff Springs Hotel, Winnipeg's Fort Garry Hotel, and Ottawa's Château Laurier have often been at the centre of the social life of their respective communities, and goodness knows in their fairy-tale details they stand out from the dross of today's public architecture but never, it seems, have their histories and images been gathered together into one production. This month Toronto publisher and filmmaker Lynx Images releases *Castles of the North*:

Canada's Grand Hotels, a film and a 304-page book chronicling Canada's great railway hotels (as many of them were) and others built early in the twentieth century that can legitimately lay claim to the word *grand*. This is good, we aver. Books give a glimpse. So do films. But we want an eyeful. And, as it happens, Lynx will be facilitating eyefuls. Through June and July, about a dozen of Canada's grand hotels will be open-to-view for free, one-day-only, behind-the-scenes guided tours. This is a chance to not only see what the \$2,000-per-night royal suite looks like, but the kitchens, garrets, and tunnels, too, as well as to hear lore from the days when these hotels were truly cities within cities. If you want to roll up for the grand hotel tour in your city, check out Lynx Images' website <www.lynx-images.com> for scheduled dates and times.



Website of the month

Summer says gin and tonic to us, but we're prepared to stretch the notion on a one-time-only basis to include whisky, the liquid refresher that made Walkerville famous. Actually, whisky made Walkerville. Period. Now incorporated into the city of Windsor, Ontario, Walkerville started out in the nineteenth century as a planned community centred around the manufacture of amber-coloured firewater. Hiram Walker, who created a precedent in the booze trade by putting his product in consumer-friendly bottles rather than big dumb barrels, was one of those paternalistic Victorian capitalist-cum-social-reformer types with considerable energy, an inventive mind, and a firm view of his own self-importance. He envisioned his eponymous community as a progressive, self-sustaining model town with himself as kindly monarch, and so it was, by and large. Walker provided the fire and police protection, the lighting, the sewage, the running water; he incorporated the best urban design of the day, but if he didn't like the cut of your jib, buster, you didn't live and work in Walkerville.

Now the town and its mastermind are the subjects of an engaging and often humorous website—www.walkervilletimes.com—which shares, among other things, insights into innovations in the liquor trade, nineteenth-century urban planning, period architecture, and the early years of automobile manufacture. There's even a section where Grade 3 kids give their, uh, unique interpretations of local events. The *Walkerville Times* is also a monthly print publication, but the website contains an extensive archive of past articles to keep you reading well past the third whisky and soda. Or gin and tonic, as the case may be.

Disclaimer: this item does not represent surreptitious product endorsement.



Take the day off

June 22: To honour Laura Secord's thirty-kilometre walk from Queenston to Beaver Dams in 1812 to warn the British of an American attack. Try the butter rum caramel or the hazelnut bouquet.

June 25: To mark the end of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike. Take sides.

July 3: To celebrate the founding in 1608 of Quebec City by Samuel de Champlain. Sing "Bonne Fête."

July 30: To commemorate the 1962 official opening at Rogers Pass of the Trans-Canada Highway, the longest national highway in the world. Life's a highway—hitch a ride.

Scriven on screen

You read the story, now see the picture: The tragic life of itinerant nineteenth-century Ontario preacher Joseph Scriven, the subject of Shane Peacock's "A Prayer for Joseph Scriven" published in the August/September 1999 edition of *Beaver*, is scheduled for documentary treatment on History Television, July 11 at 9 P.M. Scriven wrote the poem that begins with the words, "What a friend we have in Jesus."



Boys' life

Well, once again, summer's here, and the time is right for wearing wool. Yes, indeed.

But if you're one of those itching to wear wool (or you're wearing wool that's itching) and it's about 30° outside, then it can mean only one thing – you are engaged in a historical reenactment.

Yes, the season is upon us. Across the land, men and women (okay, mostly men) are dressing up in the sweat-inducing togs of their ancestors and reliving the battles, skirmishes, manoeuvres, and encampments that made Canada what it is today – a safe haven for people who (wisely, in our opinion) prefer mock battles to the gruesomeness of the real thing, uncomfortable uniforms notwithstanding. Reenactors own muskets, not guns. The word *fife* is in their vocabulary. ("Yo, Sam, did you bring your fife?") They have tan lines that end where hats begin. But their painstaking and carefully researched hobby has a public consequence – you can view historical reenactors in action, and get a feel for the texture of life as it was lived in 1740 or 1812 or 1885.

There are more than thirty sites that host reenactments each summer across Canada. Can we cover all of them in this short space? Nope. Sorry. We therefore draw your attention away from thoughts of beach and cottage to these mild and woolly holiday diversions:

The War of 1812, for example. Always a winner with the reenactor crowd. The season kicks off with a reprise June 2 and 3 of the Battle of Stoney Creek at Battle Field Park in Stoney Creek, immediately east of Hamilton, Ontario. Some 350 people reprise the clash that helped end the American attempt to control the western part of southern Ontario. At the time, the Yanks withdrew to Fort George on the Niagara River, which they held for seven months in 1813, and so Fort George, now a national historic site at Niagara-on-the-Lake, recapitulates the garrisoning of troops with an 1812 weekend. Saturday, July 21, will see two battle reenactments at



the fort with a third scheduled for Sunday at Lundy's Lane up the river at Niagara Falls. Then, August 10–12, it's

down to Fort Erie for its living history weekend. Saturday evening the fort blows up. (In fact, it's a peat moss and bark recapitulation of the original explosion that destroyed part of the fort.)

Not all reenactments are strictly battle-oriented. Fort Chambly near present-day Chambly, east of Montreal, for one, features military demonstrations during its celebration of Fête de St. Louis August 18 and 19. Though the fort was built on the Richelieu River in 1665, the reenactment, which attracts 10,000 spectators, adopts 1750 as its time period. Roughly the same time period is represented at Fort Anne, near Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia. There, August 4 and 5, the Eighty-fourth of Foot Second Battalion Regimental Association recreates a military encampment complete with Sunday-morning religious service, eighteenth-century style.

The fur trade, too, brings out the reenactor in folks. From July 13 to 15, Old Fort William near Thunder Bay, Ontario, hosts the Great Rendezvous, the yearly summer gathering of thousands of North West Company fur traders that took place in the early nineteenth century to exchange the bounty of the continental interior for goods and supplies from Montreal. From August 4–6, a similar encampment takes place at Fort Langley, near Langley, B.C.

North-West Rebellion aficionado? June 8–10 at Fort Battleford, a ninety-minute drive northwest of Saskatoon, reenactors reprise the period of the 1885 Métis standoff. Dressed as North-West Mounted Police, militia, First Nations, and settlers, they set up camp in bell tents and conduct demonstrations with period weapons.

And if you're looking for a one-time-only, never-to-be-reenacted reenactment, consider the commemorations for the signing of the Great Peace of Montreal, in Montreal, August 4. Further details are on page 11.

Thomas Wolfe was wrong, sort of

It must be an odd sensation to have your hometown disappear within your lifetime. We're sure a whole lot of Carthaginians were darned upset after those Romans razed Carthage, but they've been dead for nearly two thousand years, so the mourning process is probably pretty much over.

But what if you lived in Cassiar? Where?, you say.

Cassiar. In our atlas, it's located 120 kilometres north of Dease Lake, in northern British Columbia not far from the Yukon border. However, our atlas was published before 1992, the year in which Cassiar, an asbestos mining town, died. Or was killed. Or was disappeared, as they used to say in one of Argentina's darker periods. In any more recent Canadian atlas, Cassiar is literally off the map.

But not out of some people's hearts or minds. Thousands of people lived and worked in Cassiar during its forty-year life span before it was bulldozed to the ground after financial difficulties forced the asbestos company into bankruptcy. In ancient times, Cassiarites would have been left only with memories. In the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, they could add photos. But these days, there's a new-fangled device—the wonderful worldwide web. Cassiar, the former bricks 'n' mortar community, is now Cassiar, the virtual community at <www.armourtech.com/~cassiar>, a place where now-rootless Cassiarites (and Cassiarphiles) can hang their virtual hats. Photo galleries, message boards, newsletters, and links take the role the local pub or community hall might have in different circumstances, suggesting possibilities for those other Canadian towns lost to the machinations of resource extraction and finances. Perhaps, even in the direst of circumstances, you *can* go home again.

As long as you have a computer.

P.S. Nevertheless, nonvirtual reality has its charms, too. From July 20 to 22, Cassiarites have scheduled their first reunion—in Vernon, a city that, until further notice, exists in reality.

The Massey Report, Fifty Years Later

The CBC in peril. Universities and cultural institutions underfunded. A new media technology flooding Canadian homes with foreign content. Private broadcasters protesting government regulation.

These may sound like today's headlines, but they were in fact the issues facing the Liberal government of Louis St. Laurent when it established the Royal Commission on National Development in the Arts, Letters, and Sciences in 1949. It has been fifty years since the Massey Commission (named for its chairman, Vincent Massey) tabled its report in the House of Commons on June 1, 1951—an appropriate occasion to reflect on its legacy.

The Massey Commission originated in the creative mind of Brooke Claxton, minister of national defence in the late 1940s. His portfolio made him an unlikely sponsor of cultural initiatives, but Claxton, to all appearances an establishment Liberal, was a crypto-artsy. In the late 1940s the government recognized it had to do something about the CBC, which was short of cash, under attack from private broadcasters, and scrambling to prepare itself for the television age. Influential Liberals were also worried about the finances of universities, which were a critically underfunded provincial responsibility. Claxton convinced the prime minister to combine these political hot potatoes with less controversial government cultural responsibilities and let a royal commission deal with the lot.

Fifty years ago, the government

The commissioners were intellectuals schooled in the 1910s and 1920s, when Victorian cultural values still held sway. ... From today's perspective this kind of cultural bias appears irredeemably anglophilic and elitist.

thought that matters of culture were best handled by cultured people. Most of the commissioners it selected were intellectuals affiliated with universities. Aside from Vincent Massey, first Canadian-born governor-general-in-waiting, there was Georges-Henri Lévesque, head of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Laval University, Hilda Neathy, a University of Saskatchewan historian, N.A.M. Mackenzie, University of British Columbia president, and Arthur Survever, a Quebec engineer. With the exception of Survever, the commissioners were intellectuals schooled in the 1910s and 1920s, when Victorian cultural values still held sway. Their general attitude toward culture was that literature, painting, ballet, theatre, and documentary films were good; soap operas, comics, burlesque, and most commercial radio were bad.

From today's perspective this kind of cultural bias appears irredeemably anglophilic and elitist. We now have an ecumenical view of culture that accepts arts and entertainment of diverse origins and varying commercial appeal. It would be hard to imagine a cultural scene that was not open to vibrant expressions of ethnic diversity, popular music, avant-garde art, and mass entertainment like movies.

Yet if we put ourselves into the mindset of the commissioners, we can see that they had good reasons for pro-

moting high culture. Although fascism had been defeated in the recent war, thinking Canadians were still troubled by its potency and by the hatred and genocide it spawned. Even as they pondered this issue, the Cold War was getting underway, making it clear that another hostile ideology, communism, was emerging as an international force.

Democracies like Canada were keen to prove to their citizens and the world at large that the liberal democratic form of government they had fought to preserve could deliver the goods. This meant blunting memories of the Depression by providing a better standard of living and social welfare. It also meant proving that liberal democracy could preserve individual freedom and provide equality of opportunity. Culture provided a means of cultivating the independent, critically minded citizens who were required to make liberal democracy work. In this sense the Massey commissioners were heirs to generations of educational reformers who sought to bring civic responsibility and social improvement through public schooling.

One might think that the Massey Commission would have taken comfort that Canada was nestled next door to the great liberal democratic power, the United States. Not so. When the commissioners looked south they saw a threat. It was not just that American

culture flooded into Canada, drowning indigenous efforts, although this was cause for grave concern. They feared American mass culture because they believed it bred passive, uncritical audiences susceptible to manipulation. The enemy of a participatory civic culture, it did nothing to cultivate the critical and engaged citizen.

The Massey Commission's belief in individual self-improvement through culture inspired two of its main recommendations: the first, the creation of an arts funding agency (to be called the Canada Council), and the second, federal government funding for universities. It also caused it to willfully ignore the mass media. The Massey Report offered no recommendations for the book-publishing or magazine industries. It acknowledged the influence of film, but limited its recommendations to the National Film Board. Only in broadcasting, which the government was already involved in—and the commission was specifically instructed to investigate—did the commission grapple with mass media. And there it showed itself to be uncomfortable with radio that was not earnestly educational, insisting that the CBC control the country's broadcasting system.

However noble the inspiration of the commissioner's high ideals, selling "culchah" to the government and the general public was a formidable task. The commission tried to exploit the heightened patriotism of the postwar period by identifying high culture with Canadian culture and defining both in opposition to American mass culture. It was aided by artists' groups like the Federation of Canadian Artists and the Canadian Conference for the Arts, which found in its hearings a national forum in which to promote their interests. The mere existence of a royal commission on culture encouraged cultural groups across the country to look to the federal government for assistance and acclimatized Canadians to the possibility of a broad federal role in the field.

The government acted on the commission's recommendations on broadcasting and university funding, the two issues that had prompted it to establish the commission in the first place. With the exception of a few projects already on the government's agenda, the rest of the commission's recom-

mendations languished. The commissioners' disappointment was alleviated somewhat six years later when the government received a \$100 million windfall in estate taxes and used the funds to set up the Canada Council.

It took more than twenty years for a sweeping federal cultural policy to emerge. It came because a whole new set of political factors were in play. The cultural initiatives of the province of Quebec—which set up its Ministry of Cultural Affairs in 1961 in the wake of the Quiet Revolution—transformed federal cultural policy from a frill to a strategic battleground in the fight for national unity. Anti-Americanism crested in the late 1960s, driven by the unpopularity of the Vietnam war and the troubled progress of the civil rights movement. Canadian nationalism was bolstered by the euphoria of the centennial celebrations, which, along with Expo 67 and Trudeauania, helped redefine the nation's self-image. In the Trudeau government's first term, money for culture gushed from the treasury as never before.

Most new cultural initiatives of this era were aimed at stimulating Canadian production in different sectors of the mass media. These included Canadian content quotas for radio and TV, Canadian ownership regulations for various media, easy financing and tax incentives to encourage a Canadian film industry, quotas and production funding to foster Canadian television, and tax incentives and regulations for magazine publishing. The Canadian Radio and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) was established. Cultural policy was increasingly treated like a form of economic policy, a fact reflected in the emergence of the term "cultural industries." Government interest in these industries is easy to understand: in the information age, information was a commodity, and culture was a sophisticated type of information in demand from mass-media outlets.

Examining the 1960s policies for the imprint of the Massey Commission, we find instead a very different approach to culture. The cultural policy makers of the 1960s were part of a generation that grew up with electronic mass media, like radio and movies. Unlike the Massey commissioners, they had a decade and a half of television viewing under

their belts. Media and culture were inextricable in their world view, and their policies reflected the fact. It was economic nationalism and the interests of Canadian cultural producers that drove them, not an interest in uplifting individuals. The Massey Commission's legacy was evident in national cultural institutions and the universities, which received a lot more government money during this period, but they were not the centre of action in the cultural policy arena. Canadian cultural policy had taken off in a new direction.

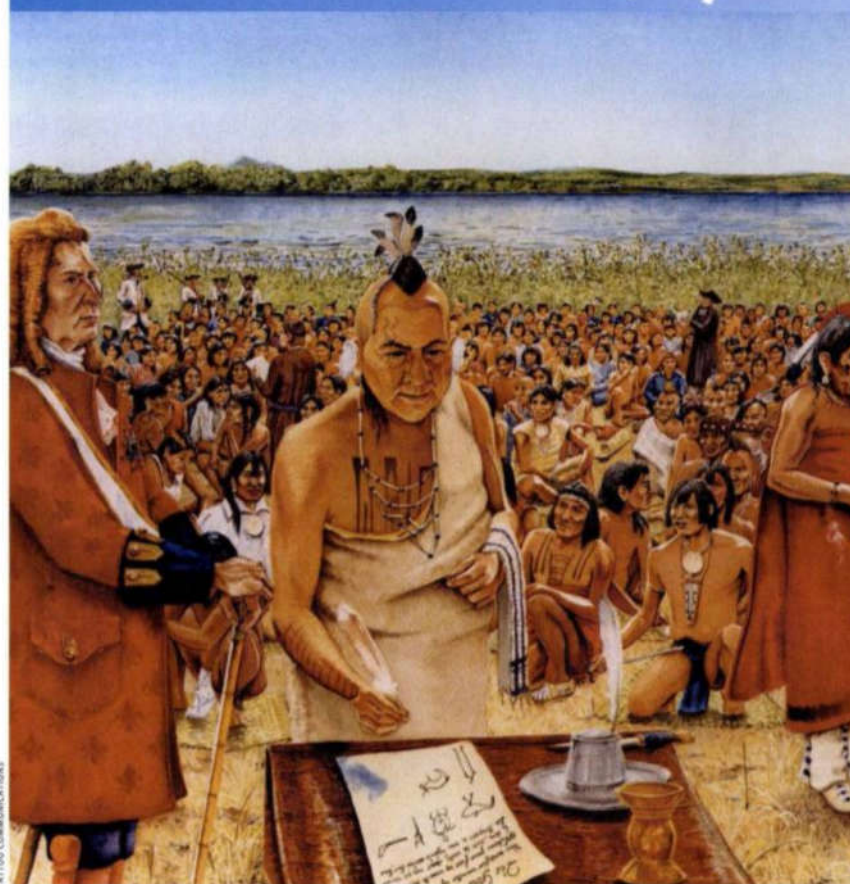
Oddly enough, it was in this period that the reputation of the Massey Commission peaked. Its report was increasingly cited as a watershed document that had established a blueprint for modern Canadian cultural development. The commissioners were lauded for the courage of their convictions, the clarity of their vision, the literacy of their report. The contrast between the Massey approach and the newer cultural strategy made such praise a bit jarring. But there was a good reason that the commission got this treatment. When culture suddenly became a rapidly expanding sector of federal policy, cultural nationalists and a growing cadre of cultural bureaucrats found themselves riding a juggernaut. They needed a frame of reference to explain and justify the government's actions in the field. The Massey Commission provided a convenient founding myth.

Historical reputations are made and perpetuated in ways that reflect the needs of later times as much as the attributes of the subjects they address. From the perspective of the new millennium, the Massey Commission appears to have more to do with the nineteenth than the twenty-first century. Its report was an inspiration to the Canadian cultural community when it came out, but it brought little immediate change, and its vision of culture was largely ignored. Nevertheless, it provided an extremely useful precedent for a later generation of cultural nationalists. For the past thirty years, it has served worthily, if symbolically, as the fountainhead of Canadian cultural policy. ■

Paul Litt is a historian who specializes in Canadian cultural and public history. He is the author of *The Muses, the Masses and the Massey Commission* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992).

by
Julia Gedeon Matusky

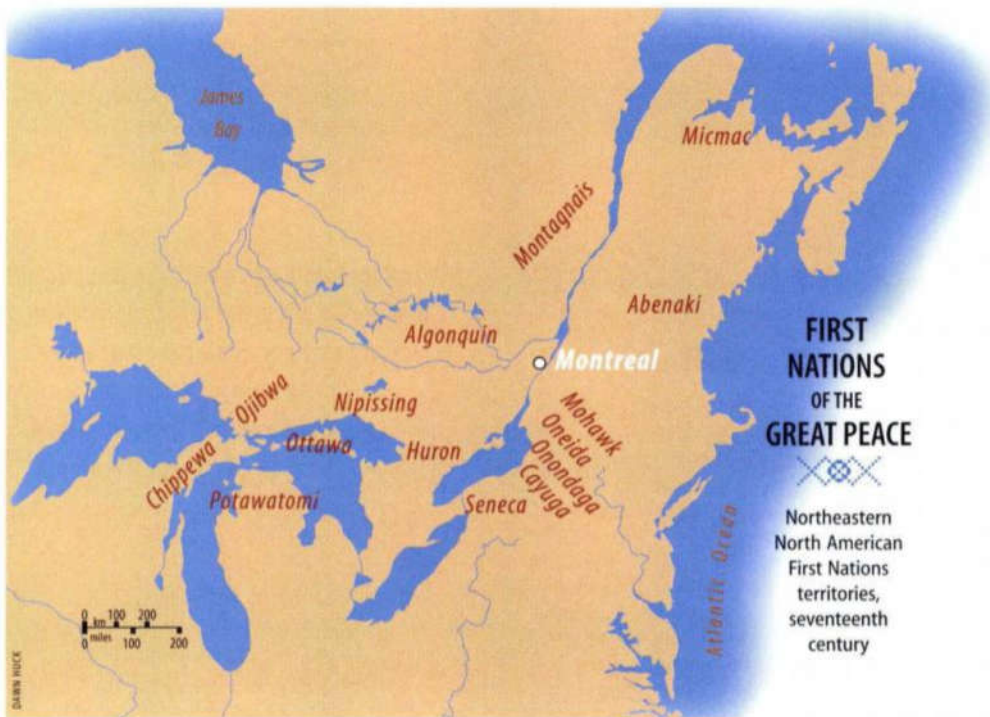
AYTON COMMUNITY TRUST



The French diplomat Louis Thomas Chabert de Joncaire, once a prisoner of the Seneca, knew the custom of condolences. He took Tekanoet by the arm and guided him and the other chiefs, hand in hand, to the grand council to await *Onontio* (the French governor). When representatives of the Algonquin, Abenaki, Micmac, and several other French allies turned up,

THE BEAVER ■ JUNE | JULY 2001

When the French, on behalf of fur trade monopolists, inserted themselves into the rhythms of First Nations societies in the early seventeenth century, they became enmeshed in regional hostilities. Finally, in 1701, after nearly a hundred years of recurrent warfare, French and natives joined together in a spectacular summit to sign a treaty that would end the atrocities and guarantee peace for more than a half century.



thirty-nine sovereign nations (including France) had a voice at the summit. The native ambassadors outnumbered Montreal's population by 100.

Three hundred years later, the significance of the peace accord signed on August 4, 1701, has not been lost. The Great Peace of Montreal is now seen as one of the most important military and diplomatic events in North America. The agreement negotiated between the Iroquois and the French and most of New France's native allies established a peace that extended from the Maritimes, throughout the southern half of Quebec and Ontario, down to Illinois. It ended the Iroquois Wars that had menaced French settlers for decades and limited colonial expansion. It enabled Montreal to prosper and the fertile land around it to be farmed. While the French showed diplomatic finesse and significant knowledge of native customs in obtaining this peace, it happened on the Iroquois' terms. They astutely considered their options, even when these became fewer, and chose peace as their most prudent course.

Ironically, the people depicted so often as brutal savages never aimed to vanquish the French. The Jesuit missionary Pierre François Xavier de Charlevoix remarked in his *His-*

tory and General Description of New France that the Iroquois always ceased their attacks "at the point where they are in a position to do us the most injury." Bruce Trigger, an anthropology professor at McGill University, points out that the Iroquois did not follow the Lachine Massacre in 1689, which terrorized the inhabitants of the Montreal region, with subsequent raids. "It wasn't in the Mohawks' interest to get rid of the French," Trigger says. "They wanted the French to be neutral and trade with them as they did others, and warfare was to persuade them to do so. Otherwise, they only retaliated when the French did nasty things to them."

The confederacy of the Iroquois Five Nations—the Seneca, Cayuga, Oneida, Onondaga, and Mohawk—likely dates to the fifteenth century, but independence persevered within tribes, villages, and clans. "Chiefs initiated change by convincing others of its benefits," Trigger explains. "No one was ordered to follow a policy, or chastised for not doing so."

The Bear clan of the Mohawks had established peace with the Dutch in 1618. They traded beaver pelts and other furs in Albany. The Turtle and Wolf clans became concerned that the Bear, bolstered by guns and exotic goods, would

assert themselves over the two other clans. To balance power, they attempted to sell furs to the French. But they were already trading with the Algonquin, Huron, and Montagnais, with whom the Iroquois remained at war. The French were forced to choose sides. The superior quality and quantity of furs from tribes living farther north than the Iroquois made the choice obvious.

The Iroquois coped by selling the fur of animals they trapped to the Dutch (and to the English after 1664) and by acting as intermediaries for other tribes whenever prices for goods or import taxes in Montreal rose steeply. By the 1640s, however, the Iroquois had exhausted the beaver population in their territory in northern New York. To expand their hunting grounds, as well as repopulate their society with Iroquoian-speaking captives (epidemics had thinned their ranks), they attacked the Huron and other tribes in southern Ontario. They also raided for furs from the camps of the Algonquin, Montagnais, and others who did not have a peace agreement with them. The raids extended as far north as James Bay. Other tribes became terrified of the Iroquois, who were preeminent warriors.



Louis-Hector de Callière was governor of New France from 1699 to 1703. Though of an ill-humoured and imperious disposition, he was, thanks to his discipline as a career soldier, experienced, capable, and prudent – well-suited to the complicated task of organizing a reconciliation of more than thirty nations that had been warring among themselves for generations. The task took him nearly three years.

Between 2,000 and 4,000 people, including the who's who of Montreal society, gathered to watch as the aboriginals, dressed in facial paint and their best feathers and fur robes, took turns to lament the past and express hopes for the future with a heartfelt theatricality of voice and gestures.

Until the Treaty of Ryswick ended the Nine Years' War between France and Britain in 1697, English colonists helped the Iroquois to attack French forts and settlements. The French, aided by their allies, carried out brutal reprisals. An attack led by Louis de Buade de Frontenac on the central Iroquois tribes in 1696 caused the most destruction. While fleeing, the Onondagas burned their own village. Phillipe de Rigaud de Vaudreuil, Frontenac's second-in-command, torched the nearby Oneida village and its food stores. The allies took advantage of the Iroquois preoccupation with the French to launch their own attacks.

Algonquin oral tradition contends that the combined forces of the Ojibwa, Ottawa, and Potawatomi inflicted great losses on the Iroquois and drove them out of southern Ontario by the end of the century. By 1699, New York's governor, the Earl of Bellomont, wrote that French allies were at the point of "totally destroying" the Iroquois. Later that year, an Iroquois orator called upon Callière for a reprieve. "I ask you, my father, to stop your allies who every day are among us breaking heads," he implored.

Besieged and without military aid from the British, the Iroquois retreated to rethink their policies toward the colonies. They had lost the hunting territories they had fought hard to acquire. Repeated warfare and epidemics had diminished the warrior population by more than half. The Five Nations confederacy reckoned 2,550 warriors in 1689, and only 1,230 nine years later. "The Iroquois could no longer easily take prisoners and integrate them into their society after the 1680s because they were more often on the defence than on the attack," explains John A. Dickinson, professor of history at l'Université de Montréal. Disease and the destruction of food supplies took a greater toll on the rest of the Iroquois society, especially the very young and old. "There are no exact numbers, but some estimates run as high as seventy per cent," says Kanataktak, executive director of Kanien'kehaka Onkwawén:na Raotitiohkwa, the cultural centre at Kahnawake, a Mohawk community near Montreal. "Imagine taking ten of your relatives and knowing that seven of them are going to die."

Steady immigration had further weakened the Iroquois' demographic

position. By 1700, the population of New France was more than double that of the confederacy. French settlements along the St. Lawrence ruled out Iroquois expansion to the northeast. The sizeable Mohawk communities around Montreal made fighting in the town unpalatable. Even when nations within the confederacy vehemently disagreed with each other, they went out of their way to avoid placing other Iroquois in the midst of a battle. The Iroquois could expand westward, but not with so many tribes at war with them. Besides, they recognized the opportunity to resume an intermediary role between some western Indians and the British after Louis XIV, responding to an oversupply of furs, withdrew French troops from the West and prohibited trade in the region. A treaty with the French would facilitate trade between Albany and the West—the large expanse of land occupied by several tribes along the southern shores of the Great Lakes down to the Ohio Valley.

The Iroquois also realized that an alliance with some tribes would make it easier to combat others, especially with the French gone. Peace with the French became all the more attractive to the Iroquois after the British stopped giving them military aid to fight the French and had unilaterally declared the Iroquois to be British subjects. Many Iroquois aimed to get the best prices for their furs by playing the English and the French off each other. Though the strategy divided the confederacy, four of the Five Nations made their way to Montreal.

The Iroquois and French resumed talks in 1699 and signed an important treaty with thirteen signatories in September of 1700. The Iroquois demanded that all prisoners be freed and that they have the right to sell furs at Fort Frontenac (the site of present-day Kingston) at the same price as in Montreal. Callière agreed despite the edict forbidding trade at the fort. The deal ended the wars with the tribes west of New France. The Iroquois wanted a subsequent treaty signed in Albany, but Callière called upon the Iroquois and all French allies to gather in Montreal to work out a general peace the following summer.

In July 1701, they began arriving. For the general council, a rectangular arena measuring 43 by 24 metres had been covered with leaves on the flat land between Montreal and the river to make it comfortable to sit for the harangues to come. Between 2,000 and 4,000 people, including the who's who of Montreal society, gathered to watch as the aboriginals, dressed in facial paint and their best feathers and fur robes, took turns to lament the past and express hopes for the future with a heartfelt theatricality of voice and gestures.

Callière spoke first through an interpreter, welcoming his "children." Subsequent speakers placed wampum belts of polished seashell beads or other gifts at the feet of the people they wanted to address. Custom demanded absolute silence during the lengthy speeches delivered by the best orators of each nation. Only other members of the tribe could interject or show enthusiasm for the words expressed. When all had spoken, the French passed around the treaty to be signed; the natives responded by offering the peace pipe. The ceremony ended with festive songs sung around a bonfire and artillery fire. The process had taken four years. It often faced difficulties regarding the release of prisoners

Meanwhile, three hundred years later ...

A reenactment of the signing of the Great Peace in Montreal, scheduled for August 4, is to be the highlight of a summer-long series of activities and exhibitions in celebration of the tercentenary of the 1701 treaty that ended conflict between New France and the Iroquois confederacy.

The signing will include the symbolic arrival of a First Nations delegation by canoe, followed by commemoration ceremonies and a concert featuring European and aboriginal artists. It will be the centerpiece of a three-day Great Peace encampment, August 3 to 5, in the squares of Place d'Youville and Place Royale and along St-Paul and other cobblestone streets of Old Montreal, in which artisans and storytellers in traditional costume will share aspects of native and French colonial culture. Festivities will end August 5 with a grand corn roast, a homage to one of the central foods of Iroquoian culture.

Great Peace celebrations will be officially launched by the eleventh annual First Peoples' Festival, June 11 to 21. One of the main events will be the Parade of First Ambassadors in which young people, as the culmination of year-long educational activities, reenact the pomp of the historic peace conference.

Meanwhile, several Montreal institutions have mounted exhibitions to mark the event. Point-à-

Callière, the Montreal Museum of Archaeology and History, named for the French governor who signed the peace agreement, is featuring 1701, *the Great Peace of Montréal* until September 16, which showcases artifacts from collections across North America and Europe that give the political, social, economic, and geo-



Eastern Woodlands powder horn, early nineteenth century.

graphical context of the treaty signing. Included is the original treaty document, usually stored in France's national archives.

Until September 9, the McCord Museum is presenting *Living Words: Aboriginal Diplomats of the 18th Century*, an exhibition focusing on the notable native orators who spoke for their communities during negotiations with the Europeans. The exhibition draws on the McCord's exceptional collection of aboriginal objects including garments, wampum, trade silver, calumets, maps, and archival documents. Objects borrowed for the exhibit from other institutions include John Verelst's dramatic oil paintings of the "Four Kings of Canada"—native spokesmen who visited the court of Queen Anne in London in 1710.

For further information, visit the Great Peace website at <www.grandepaix.org> or phone 1-866-833-0331. ■

by Philip Jensen There are tunnels below the streets of Moose Jaw. When anti-Chinese hysteria was strong, Chinese immigrants huddled in them. When Prohibition reigned, bootleggers smuggled booze through them.

Or so they say.

The Saskatchewan city is capitalizing on its tunnel legacy. But is the tunnel lore based in fact? Or, is it an

Urban Legend

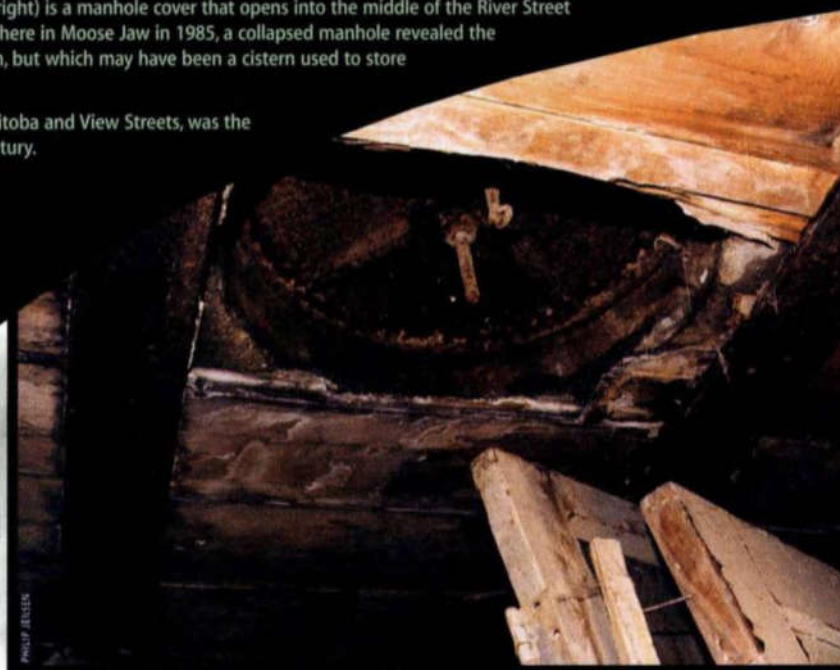
It's eight o'clock on a weekday evening, and the restaurant is nearly empty. Two men in baseball caps glance my way, then return to drinking their coffee and saying little. They have the hard, honest look of prairie farmers. Men you can trust. A younger man is seated in the smoking section with two children. The blonde waitress takes my order, then refills the children's plates from an nearly depleted buffet. Her hand trails across the young man's shoulder as she passes.

It's a place without pretensions, the kind of place that provides hearty meals at reasonable prices. My sandwich is a monumental affair and the bill comes to just \$4.50, including coffee. When I go to pay, the cashier invites me to come back for breakfast in the morning. They're open at six, and the special of bacon, eggs, and toast is just \$1.99.

The people of Moose Jaw are children of the prairies. They believe in the virtue of hard work and in giving honest value for a dollar. Prairie people have always lived that way.

In the ceiling inside the tunnel adjacent to the Bole Building (below, right) is a manhole cover that opens into the middle of the River Street sidewalk. Note the two railway tracks that support the ceiling. Elsewhere in Moose Jaw in 1985, a collapsed manhole revealed the presence of a subterranean chamber not linked to the sewage system, but which may have been a cistern used to store water or, by some recollections, to facilitate the Chinese population.

River Street (bottom), circa 1912, looking west. River, along with Manitoba and View Streets, was the centre of vice in Moose Jaw in the early decades of the twentieth century.



Remnants of what appear to be passageways and secret chambers have been found adjoining the cellars of more than one old downtown building. No one knows for certain who built them, or why.

That's how
they've survived.
And that's why the tunnels
are so troubling.

The Tunnels of Moose Jaw, a smartly packaged tourist attraction, has drawn tens of thousands of visitors during the past year. "Our purpose is not just to entertain, but to inform and enlighten as well," says the tour guide. "We don't pretend to know everything that went on. We just want to help you imagine a bit." She doesn't mention that the tunnels we're about to see are not authentic. Or that much of the history is unsubstantiated. And few visitors will ever know another Moose Jaw secret—that many residents believe the genuine tunnels still remain undiscovered somewhere beneath the city streets.

Bruce Fairman runs a small computer store near the south end of Main Street. "There are tunnels," he says, smiling. He nods in the direction of the Tunnels of Moose Jaw office, confident that I know what he means. The tunnels have all been dug within the past year.

Ron Walter, a *Moose Jaw Times-Herald* reporter, says, "If we were in the United States, these [simulated] tunnels would have been built years ago." He adds, "It's easy to be skeptical. My gut feeling is the [genuine] tunnels do exist."

Walter's conviction that the legends are true is based on more than just a vague feeling in his gut. Remnants of what appear to be passageways and secret chambers have been found adjoining the cellars of more than one old downtown building. No one knows for certain who built them, or why.

However, the rumours have been circulating for generations. According to one story, the tunnels were started by Chinese railway workers about 1908, after several members of their group were attacked and killed at the CPR yards. The Chinese moved underground and lived there for years. Later, during Prohibition, bootleggers took over the network of passages. Some stories even claim that Al Capone was a frequent visitor to the city, going about his secret business under the streets of Moose Jaw.

Walter believes all that's needed as proof of the stories is for just one member of the Chinese community to step forward and confirm them. But it may be too late for that. Seventy-six-year-old Key Wong has lived and worked in Moose Jaw since 1939.

"Honest, I don't know much about that stuff," he says. "About twenty years ago when some of the old-timers still lived, maybe they can tell you." Wong suggested I contact Moon Mullin, a member of the white community. "Moon, he's the oldest one. Maybe he knows. He was young at that time. I think there's some truth."

Moon Mullin claims to be one of the few surviving tun-

nel crawlers, if such a thing ever existed.

Some folks in town, people who should know, swear that he's making the whole thing up. But, for his part, Mullin isn't changing a story that reaches eighty years into his past.

Born in rural Saskatchewan, on December 29, 1910, Lawrence Mullin got his nickname soon after the family moved to Moose Jaw. It was 1919, and the city was already famous for its high-rolling lifestyle.

Located at the intersection of the Soo line from Chicago and the CPR line running east and west, Moose Jaw was one of the most exciting cities in Canada at the time. In *Red Lights on the Prairies*, James Gray quotes a journalist who visited there just after the First World War:

You came out of the Moose Jaw station, turned left on River Street and you could have been in New Orleans. ... Everything in Moose Jaw was wide open. By night the streets were really filled with men roaming around, and the traffic down to the whore houses at the other end of the street was something to see.

The city's prostitutes took care of business on Manitoba Street, directly across from the CPR station. One block north on River Street, gambling and booze were king. View Street, another block north, was the boundary line that separated vice from respectability. The city gains elevation as you move north, and the term "North Hill Resident" was coined to describe the more prudish citizens who never strayed south of View Street. A careful listener can still hear the expression used in Moose Jaw today.

I interviewed Mullin at his home on the North Hill, a long way in time and distance from the haunts of his youth. "Down there on River Street, us boys were reigning supreme," he says. "They were all good to us."

"Dad, he liked to play poker and he gambled. He was involved in this. Anyway these men were bringing booze in from down east on the railroad. They had this tunnel across from the CPR station ... and they said to Dad, 'Them little Chinese tunnels are so small that only they can wiggle through there with certain things. That'd be good connections for communicating if only we just had somebody that could travel through them.' Dad says, 'Oh, my boy can do that easy.'"

Just eleven years old, Moon was the first of five boys recruited as tunnel crawlers. He recalls hanging out at a newspaper stand on River Street. The notorious police chief Walter Johnson would ride up on his horse and buy a paper. "'Storm coming tonight,' he'd say."

"As soon as Chief Johnson was gone, I'd run over to 51 River Street and downstairs. Rap twice on the door. A Chinaman would open the door. I'd go through there and down more stairs. There would be a whole room full of men playing poker. I'd say to Jack, the guy in there, 'Storm tonight,' and everything would disappear!" Moon would crawl through a series of tunnels, passing the message several more times, before going back up to the street, and home. He'd earn ten or twenty-five cents for his work.

"There is a man that nobody understood," Mullin says of Chief Johnson. "They persecute him now, and they're all wrong. He's one of the nicest men that I've ever met. I understand now perfectly what he was going through. He was riding the fence like Sweden did during the war. And you can't misjudge a man for that. He couldn't work one side and not the other side. It was a way to keep communicating—with us boys through the underground, and the outside world on both sides. And of course us kids were friendly with them all.

"I never met Al Capone. Whether my mind is fading or not, I don't know, but I think I know he was there," Mullin says. "I knew Diamond Jim Brady, his henchman, real well.

"I can remember it vividly, just like it was yesterday, when I met him. He was about five foot ten, I'd say. Wide in the shoulders. He wore a gray suit, and he had the coat open partly in the front and I could see the butt of a gun under his arm. And he got eyes on him just like a reptile. He'd just almost paralyze you when he looked at you. He never blinked.

"He'd tell you, 'Now look, there's no such a thing except a good boy. I don't want nothing to do with bad ones. I don't believe in this crookedness [bootlegging]. This here is a way of life that we're doing here, and it's different, but we're forced into this position. We're not doing this because we like it, but we've got to make a living and this is the only way we can do it. But the day will come, and I'm going to tell you straight out—it'll be as free as a bird, all over.'

"And he's right. It is! So them men were a little more farsighted than them that were trying to knock them down."

After leaving the North Hill, I stop by to see Bruce Fairman again. The author of half a dozen self-published historical works, Fairman knows his local history. "I think they've tried to make fact from legend," he says. He refers me to Leith Knight, a popular historical columnist at the local paper.

Knight's views on the tunnels are well documented. In a 1991 interview with the *Regina Leader Post* she said, "As far as I'm concerned it all started with a couple of reporters in a beer parlour about 20 years ago. The idea was to drum up some local interest. Someone said, 'You know, Al Capone could have come up over the Soo Line and hung out in Moose Jaw.' So they decided to go along with it. As far as I know, that's how it started."

She mentions a 1986 study by Moose Jaw's Business Improvement District (BID). "The downtown business people commissioned a study, and the tunnels and Al Capone stories just didn't materialize," Knight says.

But not everyone agrees with Knight. A 1986 story in the *Moose Jaw Times-Herald* tells about discoveries a BID investigator made while searching downtown basements. "He estimated finding clear physical proof of tunnels or passages in eight or 10 buildings in that area," the article states. It goes on to say that the investigator also discovered archival references to a Regina lawsuit involving Al Capone.

The introduction to the BID report of the study includes the comment, "We have concluded that there is enough truth in the stories to warrant further investigation. In order

to definitely prove or disprove the rumours we feel that some excavations should be done properly by professionals or semi-professionals."

BID investigators interviewed Leith Knight. She mentions hearing rumours about tunnels connecting two houses, owned by one Sam Tadman, "who was involved in the illegal sale of liquor with the Bronfman Brothers' Realty World."

Unlike Capone, the Bronfmans weren't criminals. But they owned a number of hotels in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, and temperance was ruining their business. Rather than perish, the Bronfman brothers took advantage of the unique opportunities offered by Prohibition. They did so well that by 1928 they were able to purchase a failing Seagrams distillery for \$1.5 million. Before winding up its affairs more than seventy years later, they had built the company into a Canadian icon and parlayed its value to U.S. \$8 billion.

Canadian prohibition was based on the 1878 Canada Temperance Act, which gave provincial governments control of all retail liquor sales within their borders. Saskatchewan, the first province to take advantage of the act, closed down all its bars in 1915. A year later they closed all retail liquor stores. Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, and B.C. soon followed suit. It was the Bronfman's good fortune that Quebec remained wet.

Although retail liquor sales fell under provincial jurisdiction, the federal government had retained sole control of the interprovincial liquor trade. Acting quickly, Sam Bronfman opened a mail-order liquor business in a Montreal storefront and began supplying whisky to customers all across Canada. The approach worked wonderfully until 1918, when the federal government outlawed interprovincial liquor shipments. Undeterred, the Bronfman brothers moved on to the next obvious legal loophole: Under Saskatchewan law, druggists could legally import and sell liquor for medicinal purposes. Harry Bronfman, who ran the Balmoral Hotel in Yorkton, procured a wholesale druggists licence, and the brothers were soon major distributors of whisky to drugstores all over the province.

By the time Canadian restrictions were removed in 1920, American prohibition was already in place. With their warehouse full of liquor in Yorkton, the Bronfmans were ideally placed to begin exporting to markets south of the border. And under Canadian law it was all strictly legal, as long as provincial taxes were duly paid on liquor shipped to the states.

The tunnel legends have been fuelled over the years by recurring street cave-ins, which often reveal mysterious underground cavities. Some of the tunnelliike openings are explained away as old utility corridors. But others aren't so easily dismissed. The collapse of a manhole in 1985 exposed what the BID report called a large "brick-lined, bell-shaped area" under the street. City workers didn't think the opening was part of the sewer system, and speculated that it may have been a cistern. According to a witness, interviewed for the study, the opening had been used for more than storing water. "A woman who lived in the Elk



Block in the 1940s

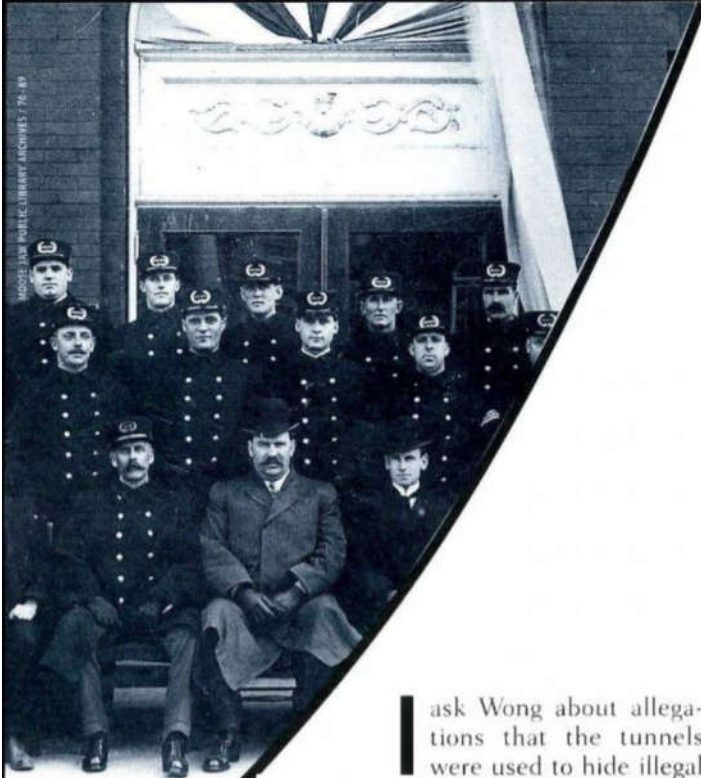
remembers seeing people, mostly Chinese, coming up out of a hole off the alley between River and Main when there was a fire in a boarding house on Manitoba."

Similar anecdotal evidence exists in abundance. The report tells of a local doctor who "remembers being called to a Chinese business on River Street West and being taken through a maze of passageways to where his patient was. He felt he went through at least two buildings and perhaps went under the alley."

The Exchange Café, owned by Key Wong's family, is frequently associated with the legends. Wong is perfectly willing to talk about the old days, but denies any knowledge of the tunnels. "We didn't have a tunnel at all," he says. "They try to promote that. Why does Moose Jaw have it? Why not Regina ... Why not Winnipeg?"

Wong's father and uncle purchased the café in 1931, and he joined them when he came to Canada in 1939. He was fifteen years old. "River Street was really booming," says Wong. "Day and night. Lots of people. My dad told me they served alcohol in a teapot. Everybody was serving. Might as well do it himself. People demand, you supply and make some money. That was under Chief Johnson. Whether Capone was there or not, I have no idea."

The café is gone now, replaced by a bootleg theme motel that stands on the original site across from the CPR station. One popular anecdote recounts a time when Chief Johnson escorted a group of prostitutes to the station and ordered them to leave town. Later that day the women were sighted by a number of witnesses—filing out of the Exchange Café. It's not clear whether they returned on the first train, or never left town in the first place. But those telling the story all say that to avoid being seen leaving the station, the women made their way to the Exchange Café through a tunnel running under Manitoba Street.



ask Wong about allegations that the tunnels were used to hide illegal immigrants. The BID study mentions a 1962 court case against a Chinese family who were accused of bringing in illegal immigrants. The accused were said to have had connections with the Exchange Café.

"I never heard much about illegal [immigrants] at that time," Wong says. "Those people came from the same area as my dad. I forgot to ask if he paid the \$400 head tax. Most of the cooks came from the same area. We had sixty staff."

Maurice Libby, another local writer, has thoroughly researched the city's early history for his new book *Moose Jaw: A Popular History*. Written with coauthor John Larsen, it is scheduled for publication in July by Couteau Books. Libby doubts that Moose Jaw's early Chinese immigrants had any reason to go underground.

"The first I heard of that was on the Tunnel Tour," he says. "It wasn't in the original legends I heard as a kid. Moose Jaw had one of the biggest populations of Chinese on the prairies. The reason is that it was a friendly place for Chinese. There wasn't really a Chinatown. There was no Chinese ghetto."

He describes the tunnel stories as being like smoke. "When you try to contain them and see what substance they have, they just curl through your fingers and disappear."

But Libby is no scoffer. "I've seen what looked like the entrance to a tunnel under the Exchange Café. Years and years ago, we had the use of the building for a drop-in centre and discovered a doorway in the basement with a collapsed space behind it."

His research suggests that the tunnels originate from the early part of the twentieth century, a time when the downtown core had suffered a great deal of damage by fire. Hoping to prevent further serious fires, the city passed a bylaw requiring that all heating plants in the downtown core

BOOZE HIDDEN
AMONG CRATE
OF VEGETABLES

Clockwise, from near left:

Police chief Walter Johnson (centre, front) with the Moose Jaw police force, circa 1915. Johnson, chief from 1905 to 1927, took a pragmatic approach to the vice in the town. He never rid the town of drinking, gambling, and prostitution, but he ensured these activities remained confined to an area around River Street, occasionally making raids on brothels to appease those citizens who viewed themselves as more respectable.

The cellar of the Bole Building at the corner of Main and River reveals tunnelling openings with doorways cut between basements (since blocked up). In their time, they may, among other things, have been used as utility corridors or as a courtesy to professional engineers, who were required by law to check the buildings' heating plants on a regular basis.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the primary work of Chinese immigrants to Canada was building railways, often under appalling conditions. Later, Chinese communities developed in the towns and cities along the rail lines, including Moose Jaw. By the 1920s, when this picture was taken, Chinese had taken roles in the service economy – opening laundries and restaurants – while being denied full rights of citizenship and broader economic opportunities in white-dominated society. Hysteria over Chinese immigrants was at its height during the first decade of the twentieth century, particularly in British Columbia, but whether it is a fact that Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan's Chinese population was obliged to seek refuge in underground tunnels to escape persecution or hide illegal immigrants remains unknown.

Lawrence "Moon" Mullin (right), eleven years old. Mullin says he and other boys, including his cousin Ray (left), were recruited as tunnel crawlers to pass messages back and forth during Prohibition because they were small enough to travel easily through the tight passages.

Was Al Capone, shown here in 1931, a frequent Moose Jaw visitor? There are tales of the Chicago mobster retreating to Moose Jaw when the heat was on back home. And there's said to be archival references to a Regina lawsuit involving Capone. But hard evidence of his presence in Moose Jaw remains elusive.

POLICE ARREST
FOUR ALLEGED
BOOTLEGGERS

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be maintained by a professional engineer. Libby speculates that doorways were created between many basements, making it possible for the engineer to move from one building to the next without coming up on the street.

**Tunnels clearly exist, but the mystery remains.
A few old-timers tell their stories, while
others scoff. In the meantime, the legends have
spread across the nation.**

Canadians like to think of themselves as a tolerant society, but racism was officially sanctioned in this country during the early years. Chinese immigrants were exploited for their labour in railroad construction, forestry, canning, and other industries where workers were hard to find.

The Chinese were hated and mistreated, and, as white workers became more available, laws were put in place to keep them out. In 1885, a \$50 head tax was placed on Chinese immigrants, and it rose by increments until 1904 when it peaked at \$500.

The reality of racism and the damage it's done are perhaps the most important lessons taught by the Tunnels of Moose Jaw tours. But no real evidence exists to support the stories of persecuted Chinese living in the underground tunnels, or that Chinese even built them. Some may argue that the lessons are significant enough to justify a certain carelessness with truth and accuracy. Others, however, are offended by the approach.

Grant and Sally Chow are third-generation owners of a 109-year-old heritage building on the corner of Main and River Streets, just a few doors from the Tunnels of Moose Jaw offices. Grant teaches engineering at the college, and Sally runs a specialty café on the main floor of the building.

"They never really talked to anyone in the Chinese community here," says Sally. "They're making money out of our ancestors—what they've gone through."

Grant says his grandfather and great-grandfather both paid the head tax, and he doesn't believe the Chinese ever lived in tunnels. "My dad indicated he's not aware of it." He acknowledges, however, that a lot of information has probably been lost.

"We do have tunnels in our basement, though," says Sally, smiling. Grant adds that the building to the south of him also has tunnels. He says the Tunnels of Moose Jaw company offered each of them one dollar a year for twenty years to run tours through their basements. The company excavated its own tunnels after Grant and his neighbour turned the offer down.

It's growing dark by the time Grant leads me downstairs. We pick our way through old grocery store fixtures and other remnants of bygone days to the north side of the building. There he points out an old wooden door set into the concrete wall. Casually swinging it open, Grant shines a light into the tunnel. I guess that it's about ten metres long. Both ends are blocked by rock and mortar. I step through the door, and realize I'm standing in one of the original Moose Jaw tunnels. Bits of glass, perhaps smashed whisky bottles, litter the floor. It's easy to believe this was once the lair of bootleggers.

The second passageway is directly east of the first one. It seems a little longer, but the ends are sealed up in the

same way. Light leaks through a manhole cover in the ceiling, and Grant points out sections of railroad track put in place to keep the River Street sidewalk overhead where it belongs.

Tunnels clearly exist, but the mystery remains. A few old-timers tell their stories, while others scoff. In the meantime, the legends have spread across the nation. Tourists are pouring into Moose Jaw, the city with the strange name and the colourful history.

Maurice Libby says the city has seen hard times and the tunnel tours have given it hope for the future. "Young people don't take it for granted that they'll have to leave to be successful. People are coming back to the city. The legend of the tunnels is contributing to its recovery."

While waiting to meet Libby at a Main Street restaurant one afternoon, I asked a college student what she thought of the tunnels. "There has to be something to it," she said. "There's too much evidence out there for it not to be true." She added that she'd taken the tunnel tours with her class, and been very impressed. I asked if she was a history student. "Oh no," she said. "I'm a marketing major."

The morning after my discovery of the real tunnels in Grant and Sally Chow's basement, I leave my luxury suite at the Temple Garden Spa for the last time. The hotel, which includes a natural geothermal pool on one of the upper floors, is part of an urban renewal plan conceived by the BID. It's become a popular stopping place for tourists who come to visit the tunnels.

Before leaving town I walk down to the old red-light district for one last look around. On my way back I notice that a new movie, *Urban Legends*, is playing at the old Capitol Theatre. Nothing else has really changed. Men and women, carrying the burdens of a lifetime, move through the streets as they've always done. They're the children of the prairies, believing in the virtue of hard work and giving sound value for a dollar. That's how they've always lived. And that's how they'll survive. ■

Philip Jensen is a Victoria writer. His last article, "A Passage from India," appeared in the June/July 2000 edition of the *Beaver*.

et cetera

Booze: When Whisky Ruled the West, by James Gray. Fifth House Publishing, Calgary, 1995.

Moose Jaw: A Popular History, by John Larsen & Maurice Libby. Coteau Books, Regina, July 2001.

It was a washtub that became central to the prosecution of Elizabeth Coward. Investigators found a rusted .38 revolver lying under an iron washtub on the ground in the Cowards' yard. Court later heard that Elizabeth was observed hesitating over the tub when she passed it by. She explained that she had been considering washing some clothes. But jury members were convinced otherwise.

The Trial of Elizabeth

If a woman had been on her jury, Elizabeth Coward might have been acquitted of killing her husband. If she'd been a man, she would have hung. But no women sat on juries in 1915. And most men judged women by a gentler standard. Elizabeth escaped the ultimate penalty. By the skin of her very pretty teeth.

Shortly after nightfall on September 6, 1915, a killer crept down the path to a clearing in the forest outside Fort St. James, B.C. At 9:30 P.M. a single bullet exploded from a .38 calibre revolver through "the left nostril, penetrating the base of the brain and severing the upper part... from the lower" of the sleeping victim. James Coward died immediately. Nothing would ever be the same for Elizabeth Coward, his common-law wife, and her daughter Rose Dell.

According to later recollections of the main investigating officer, District Chief Constable William Dunwoody, James Coward had something of a checkered background. Married, with three children, he had been marshal of Forest City, Iowa. By 1914, however, he had moved to the Bay

garet, eighteen, Rose, sixteen, and Elsie, nine, called themselves Dell. The son, Ralph, kept the Calibrisi name. Times were hard for the family, with Elizabeth at times forced to put one or more of the children into the care of the San Francisco Bay Area's welfare office. But no matter how poverty-stricken the family, the children loved their mother passionately and would prove this time and time again in the years following 1915.

Although Elizabeth sold her rooming house, the Cowards were seriously underfunded for their new life in British Columbia. Elizabeth put Elsie into care, sent Ralph to live with his father in nearby Watsonville, and left Rose with Margaret, who had recently married. As soon as they were established, she promised, the family would be reunited.

by Beverley Boissery and F. Murray Greenwood

Coward

*The Cowards "were very friendly...
living happily together"...*

Area of San Francisco, eventually to work as a security guard at the 1915 World's Fair, the Panama Exposition. He found lodging in Elizabeth's boarding house in Oakland, and the two were soon involved in a serious relationship.

In the spring of 1915, the couple decided to leave California to take up a preemption of 160 acres, eight kilometres south of Fort St. James, in northern B.C. Their reasons for doing so are obscure. Neither had experience with pioneer farms. Elizabeth had been born in New York before her family had drifted west. Married at thirteen to a miner named Dell in the Utah-Colorado area, she became a single mother less than a year later when Dell was purportedly killed in a mining accident. Within months she had married again, this time to a man called Calibrisi. The marriage was acrimonious and more than a decade later divorce proceedings had begun. Whether they were ever finalized is uncertain. Elizabeth had an extremely naive attitude towards legal proceedings and believed the divorce final because she had been shown a sheet of legal-looking paper. At her trial she showed a similar insouciance, maintaining that she had married James Coward, although there had been no ceremony before any minister, priest, rabbi, or justice of the peace.

What is certain is that in 1915 Elizabeth, aged thirty-two, was a single mother with four children. The daughters Mar-

After their arrival in Fort St. James, it seemed that the Cowards' luck might have changed. A generous neighbour lent his cabin while they built their own. Although their cash was soon depleted, James was able to work off his debts at the Hudson's Bay store. "Big Jim," as he was known, quickly made friends and enjoyed the time spent in the fort.

But Elizabeth, a vivacious woman, became increasingly lonely as the days passed. Her nearest neighbour—277 paces away—was the taciturn Lucetta McInnes, and after some initial socializing the two women found themselves miles apart in terms of experience, expectations, and sense of morality. By July Elizabeth's misery reached such a height that James borrowed the necessary money to send for Rose.

After Rose arrived at the Grand Trunk station in Vanderhoof, things almost immediately went awry. Her trunk was too big for the wagon James had borrowed, so he contracted with an acquaintance named Sullivan to haul it to the cabin. Sullivan then subcontracted the job to two men from the Carrier nation, promising them they would be paid one dollar on delivery. When they brought the trunk, however, James refused to pay. His contract, and theirs, was with Sullivan. Threats by the two led to counterthreats but no payment, and eventually William Dickerson, the Hudson's Bay storekeeper, settled the debt to maintain peace.

Coward's temper may have been made short by his living conditions. The borrowed cabin was small, about twelve square metres, with two bunk beds built against the back wall. One person may have managed comfortably—two, tolerably. It was impossible for three. So James rigged himself a makeshift bed about fifty metres away, using mosquito netting and a pup tent to cover an old sleigh. Maintaining marital relations thus became extraordinarily difficult.

Rose and her mother roamed the countryside, sometimes on horseback, making friends and charming those they met. There was no sign of acrimony, and to all they seemed a happy family. The events immediately preceding the murder bore this out, with the family having a short holiday in Fort St. James. No one heard them argue, and as a neighbour later testified at the murder trial, they "were very friendly ... living happily together."

On the day of the murder, September 6, James, Elizabeth, and Rose worked on their cabin in the morning. It was nearing completion and their furniture was expected to arrive from San Francisco the following month. After lunch, James walked into Fort St. James, and Elizabeth and Rose visited Lucetta McInnes, who had a guest, Florence Whitehouse, holidaying from Fort (now Prince) George. They had a marvellous time scaring the "Indianphobic" newcomer out of her wits with stories involving the native people. At one point Elizabeth mentioned that she had a

They reached Lucetta's about ten o'clock and pleaded with her and Florence to come back with them to check on James. Florence flatly refused, believing that malicious native males lurked behind every tree. Lucetta finally agreed and the three crept fearfully back along the path, with Lucetta jumping at the slightest sound. At the Cowards' borrowed cabin, she refused to go further. Why didn't they fire their guns? she asked. If James was injured, he could let them know. Then, breaking the silence after the shot and Elizabeth's calls, she announced, "He is dead, if he is there, so there is no use going up and looking at him and getting a fright, we might as well go home."

Florence accompanied them the next morning, but neither she nor Lucetta would venture near the sleigh bed. Finally Elizabeth and Rose ventured out. At first glance James seemed asleep and only after Elizabeth came to within a metre did she see blood. Then she screamed, "Oh, he is dead." Again, everyone walked away from the body to Lucetta's home. There they decided that Florence and Rose should get help from a neighbour, John Roberts.

Arriving within half an hour, at about 6:30 A.M., he proposed getting another neighbour to guard the women while he went to Fort St. James to report the death. Freeman Stewart came and stayed with the four women while they fretted the day away. Finally, authority in the form of the local magistrate, Hudson's Bay factor A.C. Murray, arrived late in the

BY MICHAEL F. GARDNER

He didn't look "as natural as usual ..."

"What was that?"

"He is dead — if he is there —

"Oh! He is dead!"

"... She kind

"My mother was with me in the house when so there is no use going up and looking at

premonition that something bad was about to happen, but as they walked home everything seemed normal.

Elizabeth and Rose made the evening meal and, as James had not returned, left some food ready for him. He was late coming home, not arriving until after eight o'clock. He had walked the first four kilometres with Lawrence Dickerson, the son of the storekeeper, who later reported him to have been in good health and spirits. Once he arrived, he ate his food, washed his plates and cutlery, and set his place for the morning's meal. According to Elizabeth's later testimony though, he didn't look "as natural as usual" when he left the cabin for his outside bed.

After the gunshot sounded an hour later, the behaviour of Rose and Elizabeth seems inexplicable. At her murder trial, Elizabeth testified that she was kneeling, saying her prayers, when she heard the shot. She jumped up, then asked Rose, "What was that?" They "hollered" to James but did not investigate when they received no answer. Instead, they pulled wrappers over their nightdresses, took a lamp, and went to the McInnes cabin—that is, in the opposite direction to the sleigh bed. Elizabeth explained this by saying she was scared of men—Indians or the gunman—in the forest and thought they might also be shot if they ventured out to the bed.

afternoon. Constable Rupert Raynor of the British Columbia Police arrived from Vanderhoof the following morning and, after looking at the corpse and deciding it was a murder case, called for reinforcements from Fort George. In the meantime, the four women packed some clothes and accompanied James's body to the fort on Wednesday afternoon.

While he waited, the inexperienced Raynor conducted his own investigation, trying to find a bullet cartridge from a missing .32 revolver, searching both the grounds and the cabin. His superior officer, Chief William Dunwoody, arrived on Friday, September 10, together with a Vanderhoof justice of the peace, D.H. Hoyer. Raynor handed them a .32 revolver with four chambers loaded with .32 ammunition and a "shell which probably belonged to an automatic pistol." Then, aided by Roberts, Stewart, and others, the hunt intensified for the missing cartridge. The men searched high and low, trashing their way through the women's clothes, smashing dishes, and even going as far as tearing up planks from the cabin's floor. Finally, on Sunday, Dunwoody appeared to have a brainwave.

Taking the fatal bullet that had been removed from James's skull in the autopsy out of his pocket, he appeared to examine it carefully before announcing that he now thought the team should search for a .38 revolver instead of

The local magistrate for Fort St. James was Hudson's Bay factor A.C. Murray. It was at the Murray home (below) that Elizabeth Coward and her daughter Rose stayed in the wake of James Coward's murder.

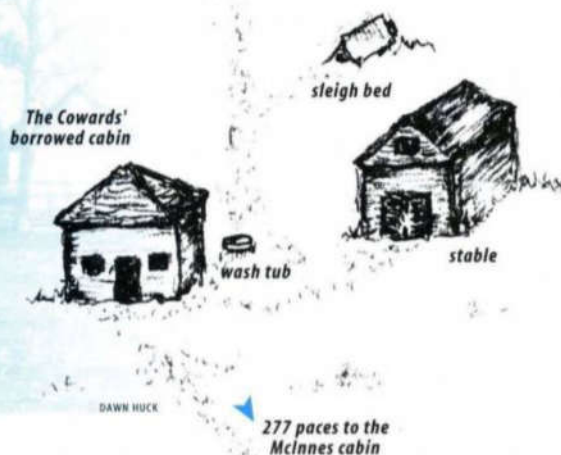
James Coward's preemption and cabin (under construction)
1 km

Fort St. James
8 km

Old Factor's House
—
Fort St. James near Douglas Lodge



The Coward home and grounds.



of hesitated in her steps ... and made a pause over this tub."

my step-father was murdered."

him ..."

"I am awful nervous trusting of you ..."

When they announced their decision, Elizabeth fainted

the .32 cartridge. Hoye went outside the cabin and within minutes discovered a slightly rusted .38 lying under an iron washtub on the ground. It was in full sight from the entrance to the cabin and the men would have walked by it if they had gone to the sleigh bed.

Convinced that Elizabeth was guilty, Dunwoody now decided to lay a trap. Elizabeth and Rose had been staying with the Murrys. Each night she had begged to be allowed to go back to the cabin for fresh clothes. Dunwoody decided to accede to this request, but he told Raynor to hide himself in the stable to see if she looked to see if the gun had been discovered. Accompanied by Mrs. Murray, Elizabeth and Rose arrived back at the cabin the following Monday morning. They exclaimed bitterly at the general destruction of their property and the fact that pack rats had now infested the cabin. There were no clean clothes to be had. Rose went off to feed the chickens and while she waited Elizabeth made a tour round the cabin. Raynor, from his spot in the stable, watched eagerly and later testified that when she came to the washtub she made "a sharp glance ... and kind of hesitated in her steps ... and made a pause over this tub I should say [for] nearly a minute." Those seconds of hesitation would almost cost Elizabeth her life.

Arriving back at the fort, both women were arrested. Elizabeth

was charged with murder and Rose with being an accessory. Shocked by this, Elizabeth tried to explain that she had only looked at the tub while considering if she should wash some clothes. Dunwoody would not listen. He knew what he knew, and what he didn't, he would manufacture.

His conduct from this point becomes as inexplicable as Elizabeth's and Rose's the night of the murder. Dunwoody seemingly made no effort to gather forensic evidence. He did not try to take fingerprints off the gun or do any ballistics tests.¹ Even the rudimentary step of connecting the fatal bullet to the rusty .38 was ignored. Instead, Dunwoody went off on an expedition for background evidence, travelling to San Francisco, Watsonville (California), Forest City (Iowa)², Winnipeg, and then to the courthouse at Clinton, arriving shortly before the trial began.

There was a mere interval of three weeks between Elizabeth

¹If he did, they were not admitted as evidence. Such testing would have been possible. Scotland Yard had virtually perfected fingerprinting during the first decade of the twentieth century and ballistic testing had played a role in previous Canadian trials.

²Dunwoody claimed in Cecil Clark's 1971 book *Tales of the British Columbia Provincial Police* that James had met Elizabeth in Forest City, that she had taken out a large insurance policy on her husband's life and maintained the premiums. Such damning testimony was not introduced into the trial by Dunwoody, although he had returned from Iowa only days before.

beth's arrest and her trial. Even if she had money, there was no time to prepare an adequate defence and no chance to recover from the shock. She and Rose were first taken from Fort St. James to Kamloops, then transferred back to Clinton—a trip of hundreds of kilometres over barely adequate roads. She was assigned a young lawyer, ill-equipped to fight for her life.

The evidence presented at trial was entirely circumstantial. No motive was ever established for the murder and no one pointed to any real acrimony between the Cowards. The trial lasted two days, with the court sitting on the first day, October 6, for thirteen hours—between 9:30 A.M. and 10:30 P.M. Judge Denis Murphy, in his haste to finish the trial, had not allowed the jury members an evening meal before they left to deliberate the following day. Whether or not hunger was a factor is a matter for conjecture: the jury members took only minutes to decide that Elizabeth was guilty. When they announced their decision, Elizabeth fainted and spectators were shocked.

As soon as the train carrying Elizabeth Coward left B.C. for Kingston Penitentiary, Rose and her family began fighting for her mother's release in a voluminous, chatty correspondence with the minister of justice, A.J. Dougherty. One letter, signed "from a broken-hearted Friend, Rose Dell," asked him to "please excuse my writing because I am awful nervous trusting of you answering with good news saying we can have our Dear Mother Back." Elizabeth also played her

part, showing an "exemplary character" and convincing the prison doctor at times that she was on the point of death. Thus, with the help of letter after letter from her family, strong recommendations for release from prison officials, petitions from various organizations such as the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and questions from the American diplomats, she was released and taken to the United States border March 29, 1922 after having served a little more than six years.

Did she kill James Coward? It is impossible to answer that question with assurance. Both she and Rose lied if such would suit their purposes. Rose, for example, offered to swear on the Bible in October 1915 that "my mother was with me in the house when my step-father was murdered." Yet she wrote three years later, "Now we all know my mother was guilty. I think my poor Mother had her cause. Of course it may not seem that way to you."³ Chief Constable Dunwoody also seems to have played fast and loose with the truth.

It is certain however that Elizabeth Coward should never have been convicted on the evidence presented in that 1915 Clinton courtroom. The Crown never proved the rusted revolver was the fatal weapon, never connected the fatal bul-

³We believe both women were separated when they heard the gunshot, with one, for example, in the outhouse. That would explain the discrepancies in their stories and, if they thought the other culpable, why they went to such lengths to protect each other.

... saying we can have our Dear Mother Back."

**"Beyond calling your attention to the fact the accused is a woman
I have no recommendation to make."**

"One's mind naturally revolts against the idea of the death sentence upon a woman."

Sham Chivalry and the Quality of Mercy

Would a woman on Elizabeth Coward's jury have forced it to consider the various problems with the prosecution's case—such as the futile search for the .32 cartridge and the miraculous immediate finding of the .38 revolver? Certainly she might have pointed to the improbability of a woman leaving a washtub face down on the ground instead of being kept in a cupboard or hanging from a nail on a wall. A tub lying on the ground might rust and would certainly have to be cleaned before possible use.

However, by common law, women were ineligible for public offices, except those of queen and regent. Until the famous "Persons Case" of 1929, decided by Canada's then highest court, the Judicial Committee of the

British Privy Council, women were not considered "persons" when that word was used in a statute, as it was in the British Columbia enactment governing jury duty in 1915. This was also so in the United Kingdom until 1918–1919 when, by acts of Parliament, women's immense and varied contributions to the war effort were rewarded by nearly general emancipation, including eligibility for jury duty in criminal cases.

The arguments against such eligibility were all based on the assumption that women were mentally inferior to men. Their only proper role was as homemakers; they could not deal with complex facts or control their emotions; their fragile psyches, suitable to pedestal purity, could not handle unseemly trials such as those

dealing in murder, rape, homosexuality, or incest. This last concern—for women's fragile psyches—was mocked by one MP in the 1919 debate as founded in "sham chivalry."

In Canada the same arguments prevailed and for far longer. British Columbia in 1922 was the first province to grant women unconditional eligibility, if they so desired. The next province to do so was Ontario—in 1951. As late as the 1970 Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women—which deplored the situation—Newfoundland and Quebec still denied eligibility, while all other provinces except British Columbia and Nova Scotia allowed females to opt in or out of jury service. Federal legislation in 1972—largely the result of long-time and determined efforts of New Brunswick Senator Muriel Fergusson—finally made women everywhere

equal in this area, both in the right and duty to serve on juries.

During the entire period in Canadian history (excluding the French period) when women were executed, males dominated the criminal law system. This often benefited individual females. Women, frequently stereotyped as irrational, mentally fragile, dupes of men, and so on, had one huge gender-based benefit—jury recommendations to mercy accompanied almost a third of the guilty verdicts in death penalty cases. These were quite common from Confederation to 1962, the last year of Canadian executions. But they were by no means always acted upon, especially if unsupported by the evidence and/or disputed by the judge. Nevertheless these recommendations were often supported by sympathetic interveners, newspapers, and judges as well as defence counsel. They may also have been responsible for commutations of the death penalty in four of five of those cases.

Where no recommendations existed, slightly more than two-thirds of those convicted hanged. Men received recommendations in just under 30 percent of the trials; women, in almost double that. Of the 301 men recommended to clemency, seventy two, or 24 percent, hanged. Of thirty-one women recommended, only one—battered wife Elizabeth Workman of Sarnia—went to the gallows in 1873.

Such sham chivalry helps explain Elizabeth Coward's fate, despite the

fact that for reasons unknown she was not favoured by a jury asking for mercy. By Confederation many influential men—and more by World War I—were becoming revolted by the very idea of executing one of the fairer but pitiable weaker sex. The statistics to 1962 tell some of the story. Close to 48 percent of more than 1,400 men condemned went to the gallows, while a mere eleven of fifty-seven capitally convicted women (19.3 percent) faced the noose.

The revulsion against executing females reached its apex in the first two decades of the last century (no executions), although attitudes modified thereafter (seven hangings, 1922–1953). Prominent politicians, such as Sir Wilfrid Laurier, informed the Commons in 1917 that hanging a woman was highly objectionable. Interveners commonly appealed to chivalry or gender. "A Male Reader," complaining in the *Calgary Herald* about men's indifference to the fate of recently convicted Jennie Hawkes, who in 1915 had shot her husband's live-in mistress, asked, "Where is chivalry? Had it all gone to the western front?" Angelina Napolitano, convicted in 1911 of murdering her physically abusive husband who tried to force her to become a prostitute, elicited the support of her Sault Ste. Marie MP. He wrote the minister of justice to announce that "Ones [sic] mind naturally revolts against the idea of the death sentence upon a woman." Neither Hawkes nor Napolitano was executed.

Elizabeth Coward may well have owed her life to this attitude. After all, she had no jury recommendation—and eight of sixteen others in like circumstances (where we know the facts)—went to the gallows. Husband-killing, moreover, was deemed to the most heinous kind of murder committed by women. Prominent posttrial lawyer, J.E. Bird of Vancouver, compared her to British nurse Edith Cavell, executed by the Germans in Belgium, October 1915, for resistance activity. Both, he wrote, had been condemned by legally constituted tribunals for crimes normally considered capital. Cavell's sentence had been widely reviled and so had Coward's throughout B.C.: "The sentiment of the community evidences that women shall not be treated in this manner, notwithstanding laws to the contrary."

Even more significant is the trial report of Judge Denis Murphy to the secretary of state, which includes this telling passage: "Beyond calling your attention to the fact the accused is a woman I have no recommendation to make." A memorandum written by an official at Justice for the minister echoed the report and Bird's claim citing Elizabeth Coward's gender and the sentiment of the community as the only justifications for clemency. Her sentence was commuted to life imprisonment. It seems certain this lenity was gender-based, another example, at least in part, of sham chivalry.

let with it, and never provided a motive. But if Elizabeth did not murder James Coward, who else might have done so?

Lucetta McInnes, who lived by herself eight kilometres from Fort St. James, had a very ambivalent attitude towards James, testifying that she felt "uncomfortable" around him. This terminology was never defined and may have been an euphemism for sexual awareness. The affable James certainly had an eye for ladies, as they said in 1915. Was the arrival of Florence Whitehouse a factor in upsetting the balance of life in the area? As well, we must ask questions about James's life and activities in Fort St. James where he spent most of his time. Might he have welshed on a debt? Cheated in a card game?

Everything about motive must be speculative. Rose, in yet another letter, claimed that James had made sexual overtures towards her and that she had told Elizabeth about this. Given everything known about Elizabeth, we might have expected her to confront James immediately. Nothing in her history, though, suggests her capable of the cold-blooded

killing that caused James's death. It is extremely doubtful that sixteen-year-old Rose would have had the maturity and nerve to have pulled the trigger either. Furthermore, if either woman had killed James, they had ample opportunities to dispose of the murder weapon. They could have put it in the creek they crossed on their way back and forth to Lucetta's or tossed it down the outhouse. Or they might have thrown it into the forest on their way into Fort St. James or hidden it in the Murrays' house once they reached there. In any case, they were simply too "street-smart" to have left the fatal gun under the washtub.

Elizabeth Coward proclaimed her innocence at the time of her arrest, during her time, and constantly while she was imprisoned in Kingston. She may well have been telling the truth.

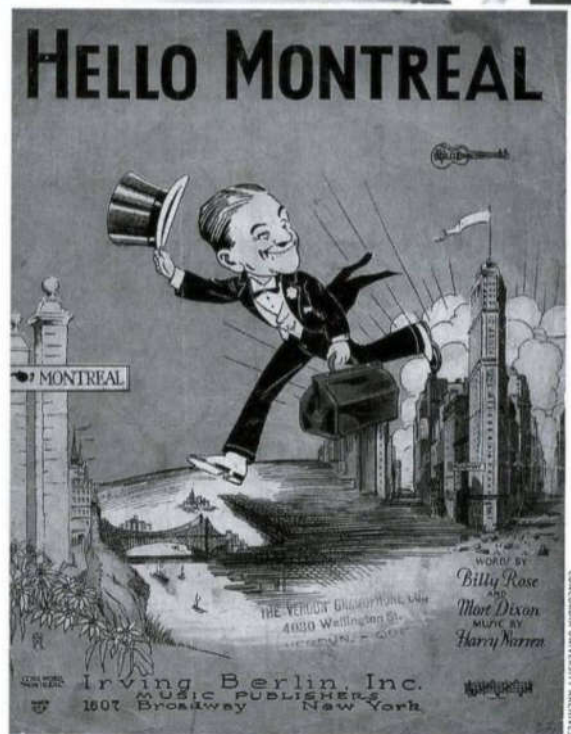
Beverley Boissery and F. Murray Greenwood are the authors of *Uncertain Justice: Canadian Women and Capital Punishment, 1754–1953*. Dr. Greenwood, a historian and constitutional scholar, passed away December 15, 2000.



The right place.
The right time. The
right guys. From
the 1920s to the
1950s, the good times
rolled in Montreal.
The nightlife was
wild. The jazz
was hot. Too soon
it was all over.

BY MARK
REYNOLDS

TOOT SWEET: WHEN JAZZ RULED MONTREAL



The Canadian Ambassadors (left, back row) pose with entertainers and staff at the Club Montmartre, Montreal, October 6, 1937. The Canadian Ambassadors, including Steep Wade (back, third from left), was the leading black band in Montreal for six years during the 1930s.

*Speak easy, speak easy, and tell the bunch,
I won't go east, I won't go west, I've got a different hunch:
I'll be leaving in the summer and
I won't be back till fall,
Goodbye Broadway, Hello Montreal**

The free-spirited and rebellious rhythms and melodies of jazz that sprang from the bayous of Louisiana found a fertile ground in what at first seems to be an incongruous locale—Montreal, a conservative town known more for chansonneries than for Charlestons.

But the lively, flashy, sometimes dangerous music took root. And for several reasons—geography, politics, history, organized crime, and race. Montreal would spawn some of the best-known names in jazz—Oscar Peterson, Myron Sutton, and Oliver Jones among them. It would also be temporary or permanent home to a host of travelling American musicians.

What brought many of them to Montreal was the city's reputation for

good times—likely because it was one of the few places in 1920s North America where booze could be bought cheaply and freely. The Quebec government never enacted prohibition laws as stringently as the rest of the continent—after a 1919 referendum, wine and beer were sold legally through licensed dealers and spirits were available through a doctor's prescription. By 1921 these regulations fell by the wayside as the province established state-run liquor stores to sell spirits, and hotels and nightclubs were granted licences to sell beer and wine.

Thus Montreal became internationally known as the place to go for tourists seeking relief from the strictures of temperance. Simple economics tells the rest of the story—with more people coming to the nightclubs, the call for musicians to entertain them grew.

By the 1920s, jazz dominated popular music. Like the rock'n'roll that followed, its roots lay in black communities in the United States, to be "discovered," and then appropriated for white audiences by white musicians. What was considered "real" jazz remained, for the most part, in the black communities. When jazz music found its way north of the border, its history was no different.

The story of jazz in Montreal, especially in its early years, is directly tied to the story of the black community in Montreal, which, though never very large in number, struggled to thrive in the face of blatant racism and limited economic opportunities. The community was late in developing. The fur-trade economy of New France never needed the large number of slaves the plantation economy of the American South did. However, there were a number of slaves in the French colony—largely domestics, imported as status symbols for the growing aristocratic class. One of these was Marie-Joseph Angelique, a domestic slave for the household of Madame de Francheville, the wife of a wealthy merchant. On April 10, 1734, she ran away with her white lover and burned down the de Francheville home to cover her escape. Such an act could not be tolerated. Two months later she was recaptured, hanged, her body burned, and her ashes scattered.

Other blacks in Quebec were free,

and some became well known in the colony. George Bonga, for example, was a nineteenth-century voyageur of almost legendary strength who worked for the North West Company. George was considered to be an expert negotiator—a valuable skill in the fur trade.

Despite the indigenous community of freed slaves and refugees from the U.S. who arrived via the Underground Railroad, the black community in Montreal remained very small compared to other provinces until the late nineteenth century, when the city's economy began to boom. With canals, bridges, and railroads under construction, black labourers were lured by the promise of jobs—from the U.S., believing they would be free from racial oppression in Canada, from Nova Scotia's black settlements, trying to escape economic privations, and from the segregated communities of Ontario. Slowly the community grew to a few thousand.

The real population boom didn't occur until 1897 when Canadian railways, mimicking their American counterparts, began a policy of hiring blacks as porters for their passenger service. Blacks fit the class prejudices of the white customers: they were thought suited to menial work, and could be paid less. They generally lived in the St. Antoine district of the city (named for the major street), where rents were cheap, and they had easy access to both major railway stations.

For a long time, though, Canadian railways persisted in hiring only American and sometimes West Indian blacks, ignoring the Canadian population. Though these men generally would set up apartments in Montreal, living and working in the city, they were not, as a rule, allowed to bring their wives or children north of the border. (The policy of importing Americans continued right into the 1930s, when Depression-era immigration controls finally forced the railways to end the practice.) The growth of a specific black neighbourhood, especially one with a large number of single men with disposable incomes, created a market for black entertainment venues.

The early decades of the last century saw the creation of a number of clubs for the black population in the St. Antoine district. The first opened in 1897, and by the 1920s there were

**Hello Montreal*. Words by Billy Rose and Mort Dixon, music by Harry Warren. ©1928 Irving Berlin Inc.

Clockwise, from near left:

Montreal's development as a rail centre at the turn of the twentieth century led to the growth of the black community in the St. Antoine district, which was accessible to the railways stations. Railways developed a policy of hiring blacks as porters for their passenger service, pandering to a white prejudice that blacks were fit only for menial labour and could be paid less. Porters often worked on three hours' sleep a night, hauled bags, made beds, shone shoes, cleaned ashtrays, and attended to passengers' needs in a variety of other ways. They were also required to be impeccably polite and pleasant, even though as grown men they were sometimes called "boy." It was 1964 before blacks were permitted to work in other positions on Canada's railways. A plaque honoring the contributions of black porters was unveiled in Montreal's Windsor Station in 1999.

The Canadian Ambassadors during a summer tour in North Bay, Ontario, in the 1930s. In the Depression, musicians took work where they could find it, and sometimes that meant leaving Montreal and touring small communities to survive. Clockwise from top: Willy Wade (drums), Lou Hooper (piano), Clyde Duncan (bass), Bernice Jordan (vocals), Mack McKenzie (trumpet), Myron Sutton (alto saxophone); centre: Lloyd Duncan (tenor saxophone).

Tina Baines, Bernice Jordan, and Marie-Claire Germaine at the Café St. Michel, a nightclub on Mountain Street. In the 1940s, the Café St. Michel was a revered jazz centre in Canada, home for many years to American trumpeter Louis Metcalfe, who had performed with Duke Ellington and Jelly Roll Morton.

Like the musical genres with roots in black American culture that followed – rock'n'roll, hip-hop, rap – jazz was at first ill-regarded by mainstream white society. Add the unabashed racial stereotyping prevalent early in the twentieth century and you have cartoons such as these, printed in the *Montreal Daily Star* in the 1920s.

A number of clubs ... catered to all the vices of single young men – drinking, gambling,

three. These catered to all the vices of single young men – drinking, gambling, and prostitution. The Nemderoloc Club ("Coloredmen" spelled backwards, in a slang style popular at the time) became particularly well known to the police and scorned by the larger black community.

The nightclubs and jazz musicians were hardly the only cultural presence in the black community at the time. There were several community associations and internationally affiliated groups active in the city then, all trying to work towards the improvement of blacks in Montreal. These included Universal Negro Improvement

Association (UNIA), the Negro Community Centre (NCC), the Coloured Women's Club, and the nondenominational Union United Church. Not all of these organizations looked kindly on nightclubs, which often had criminal connections and had the tendency to sully the reputation of blacks in the city as a whole.

Jazz music was intensely disliked by older generations, much like the rock'n'roll, rap, and rave music that followed. An article in the August 1921 edition of the *Ladies Home Journal* summed up the thinking of the time. In "Does Jazz Put the Sin in Syncopation?," Anne Shaw Faulkner declared



CANADIAN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MUSEUM, OTTAWA / 42455-19
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that "Never in the history of our land have there been such moral conditions among our young people ... the blame is laid on jazz music and its evil influence." The article went on to claim that the syncopated rhythms of jazz damaged the brain.

An article the following June in the *Montreal Herald* elucidated the white establishment biases against the new musical form. Theodore Kosloff, a visiting Russian dancer, told the *Herald* that "jazz is doomed, the white part of North America is rapidly approaching a 'morning after' disgust for her spree of sensual, Negroid dancing." He went on to claim that North Americans

would soon devise their own dances and music—ignoring the fact that this is exactly what jazz was doing.

Many in Montreal's black neighbourhoods shared the view that jazz was an inferior music and provided classical music instruction for neighbourhood children instead, as a way of overcoming negative stereotypes held by whites. However, more than one youngster schooled on Beethoven would go on to play bebop.

One of them was Harold "Steep" Wade, a saxophone player and pianist, who was one of the best-known musicians in Montreal in the 1930s and 1940s. In some ways he was the archetype of a jazz musician—hard living, hard talking, "cool," and devoted to his music above all. Wade's parents were

not very musical, but they paid for his younger sister to take violin lessons and for him to take piano lessons, though he wasn't enthusiastic. According to some, he shunned his lessons, and instead learned to play piano by watching the movement of the keys on a player piano. It wasn't until he started to hang out at the famous Rockhead's Paradise when the house musicians were rehearsing that he decided to take playing "the box" (as he called it) more seriously.

Jazz was as much an attitude and a lifestyle as it was a musical style. There were always two kinds of jazz, the commercial variety found in the clubs that largely catered to white audiences, and "real" jazz—hard-driving, high-energy music with more ragged rhythms and complex melodies. This was the jazz of



Shade of Dante:—I was before my time in picturing the inferno. I should have waited for this.



ONE SIGN OF RETURNING WORLD SANITY: Being chased back to where he came from.

the after-hours clubs, where jam sessions would go on until morning, where musicians, yearning to free themselves from the shackles of show-bar performing, would gather to play the more daring and experimental music that touring musicians brought from the U.S.

Wade was devoted to the music and to the lifestyle—perhaps at the expense of a more lucrative career in commercial music. For older musicians, the lifestyle usually included alcohol. For many, it included marijuana. By the 1930s it started to include heroin, to which Wade and his drummer friend Wilkie Wilkinson were thoroughly addicted.

Most jazz acts that came from Canada could only tour within Canada. Restrictive American labour laws

forbade Canadian musicians from playing in the States if an American could do the job—unless the act was a solo attraction with name recognition. So, despite being one of the best “comp” (accompaniment) pianists in Montreal (the famed Oscar Peterson was considered to be more of a soloist), Wade was unable to succeed in the larger market to the south. His heroin addiction, which was probably known to the RCMP, likely would have made it impossible anyway.

Wade was thus confined to Montreal, where he made his living on “the corner.” Here—where St. Antoine meets Mountain Street—Rufus Rockhead’s three-floor show bar was located. Facing it was the Café St Michel, where the famed American trumpeter Louis

Metcalf had his band for years, with Wade on piano. For a serious Montreal jazz musician, making your living on the corner was the measure of success.

Rockhead’s Paradise was perhaps the most famous bar in Montreal. Owned and operated by Rufus Rockhead, a West Indian immigrant, Rockhead’s opened in 1928. Legend has it that Rufus earned the seed money to buy the club by smuggling booze into the United States while working as a porter. Rufus would stand by the door of his club, always impeccably turned out, only allowing those people he knew by sight into the facilities, handing roses to the ladies. He always insisted on having the best musicians, and would often tell individual members of bands he hired that they were not good enough to play at his bar.

Recalls retired Montreal drummer Little Willy: “[When I was young] I used to go there to see my grandmother [a cleaner] in Rockhead’s all the time, and when there’d be rehearsals, I’d go over there and talk to the musicians. My grandmother always used to yell at me, ‘Get away from those fellas!’”

These experiences inspired his own entry in the music business. Little Willy played in Montreal for decades, as a singer, and then as a drummer. His family had many ties to Rockhead’s—his mother was a showgirl there and his brother was a doorman.

“Rockhead’s, Café St Michel—if you could play at them places you could play anywhere,” he says. But the real money, he adds, was in the uptown “white” bars.

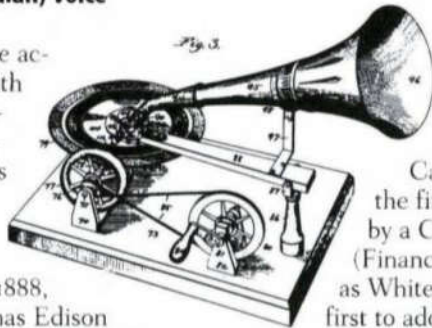
Racial sentiments of the day were also a factor in limiting Wade’s career. White clubs often would not hire black bands, especially after the Depression hit. Once the popular Johnny Holmes Orchestra was nearly banned from performing at the Ritz Carlton hotel because they refused to play without their star pianist—a young Oscar Peterson. Many clubs—even “black” bars—refused to hire what were called “mixed” orchestras. The racial divide hurt black and white musicians. Whites, many of whom played jazz in Montreal, could

His Master’s (Canadian) Voice

Canada can be accredited with many little-known historical firsts in the history of sound recording, both in Canada and the world. In 1888, for example, Thomas Edison made a phonograph recording Canada’s governor general, Lord Stanley, bidding the American president a diplomatic welcome to the Toronto Industrial Exhibition. Canada may not have realized it at the time, but it had just produced the world’s first political sound bite.

Canada would also give rise to the career of Emile Berliner, the German-born inventor of the gramophone. When he initially failed to successfully market his invention in the United States in the 1890s, Berliner sold his American patent to Elridge Johnson, who would use it to found the illustrious Victor Talking Machine Company. Regretting that he had lost control over his invention in the United States, Berliner decided to reassert it in Canada and by 1897 had obtained a Canadian patent and set up shop in Montreal.

Berliner’s Canadian gramophone dynasty can boast many firsts in the



history of sound recording. Berliner was the first to record French-

Canadian folk music, the first to record a speech by a Canadian politician (Finance Minister Sir Thomas White in 1918), and the first to adopt that now familiar trademark image of the fox terrier staring quizzically into a gramophone horn. Berliner’s son, Herbert, furthermore, would pioneer Canadian jazz recording in the early 1920s. Starting up Ajax, a record label of what was then called “race records”—so termed because its intended audience was exclusively African-American—Herbert Berliner made the first recordings of jazz artists, such as Milard Thomas and his Famous Chicago Novelty Orchestra, who were from Montreal’s black community.

Though Victor records would eventually buy out his company, Emile Berliner’s innovations left their mark upon Canada, and especially Montreal. Indeed, until after the Second World War, as jazz historian John Gilmore relates in *Swinging in Paradise*, Montreal was the only city in Canada where musicians could record. ■

—Matthew Rankin

Orchestra was nearly banned from performing at the Ritz Carlton hotel because they refused to play without their star pianist – a young Oscar Peterson. Many clubs – even “black” bars – refused to hire what were called “mixed” orchestras.

often only play with black musicians in jam sessions after hours; the famed French-Canadian violinist Willy Girard was one of them.

Things started to fall apart for Steep Wade in the late 1940s and early 1950s. In 1949 Louis Metcalfe moved his band to the east end of the city. Wade quit a year later. He played less often, but he was seen around the neighbourhood bars just as frequently. He had a short-lived job at a small club playing for strippers, but that didn't last. Friends started to notice he was more withdrawn and temper-

amental, his behaviour more erratic.

“Steep would sometimes fall asleep at the piano, but when he woke up, he always knew where he was,” recalls bass player Jack Kostenuk.

In December 1953 his wife Johann, an American showgirl, came home to their rooming house apartment to find Steep dead at the age of thirty-five. The diagnosis was natural causes, but most people who knew him believe it was “the heavy” – heroin.

Had Wade lived, it is doubtful he would have liked what happened to the Montreal jazz scene. Rock'n'roll

made its appearance, as did prerecorded music in taverns. The election of Jean Lesage as premier and the reelection of Jean Drapeau as mayor in quick succession in 1960 turned around both Quebec and Montreal society. The Quiet Revolution, which broke the moral stranglehold of the Catholic Church, meant that the relatively innocent titillation offered by the showgirls of the chorus lines quickly gave way to strippers – who, at best, either wanted a simple grinding beat for musical accompaniment or brought prerecorded music.

A racially mixed, Montreal-based band (left) led by trumpeter Jimmy Jones (at far right) during a 1943 engagement. Other members include, from left to right, Mark Weinberg (drums), an unidentified bassist, Herb Johnson (tenor saxophone), Harold “Steep” Wade (piano), and Harry Maxham (alto saxophone).

Oscar Peterson (centre) on stage at Victoria Hall with the Johnny Holmes Orchestra around 1946. In the background are drummer Russ Dufort and guitarist Armand Samson. The Johnny Holmes Orchestra was a popular Montreal big band in the 1940s. The swing music it and other big bands played helped to popularize jazz, though as individuals, big-band musicians were often peripheral to the jazz scene. Nonetheless it was a big band that nurtured Montreal's – and Canada's – most famous jazz star, Oscar Peterson.

Jean Drapeau (near left, at right) with Pacifique Plante, assistant director of the Montreal Police, August 18, 1955. Since night-clubs were intertwined with organized crime, the election of Jean Drapeau as mayor in 1954 on a promise to rid Montreal of vice and corruption signalled the beginning of the end of the jazz scene in Montreal, which, through the 1950s would be further eroded by prerecorded music in taverns and the rise of rock'n'roll. By the 1970s, much of the St. Antoine district – the heart of the jazz scene – would fall to the large-scale urban improvements, such as the Ville Marie Expressway, that were central to Drapeau's vision of Montreal as a first-rank world metropolis.

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Organized crime was huge in Montreal. Gambling revenues alone brought in as much as \$100 million a year in the years immediately following World War II—some years as much as \$40 million more than the city's tax revenues. Many police, reporters, and city hall employees were in the pocket of the Mob.

In order to appear to be doing something about crime, police would often padlock brothels or gambling houses—closing closets, false doors, and side entrances. One gambling house, which brought in a reputed \$2.5 million every year, had forty-three “apartments” for a floor space of 170 square metres. The apartments were little more than cardboard boxes, assembled so the police could claim to have shut down the gambling operation at that particular address—even as the dice rolled behind them.

The crime bosses, though brutal to their enemies, were relatively kind to the musicians who played in their clubs. As one performer put it, “Whatever they did, nobody knew. It was nobody's business, and they kept it that way. I'd rather work for them than anybody. You didn't have to worry about your money, and nobody would bother you.”

Though many musicians admit the crime was getting out of hand, they have few fond memories of Drapeau. The mayor's campaign to clean up the city's reputation and make it an international centre of industry and culture had the unintended side effect of ruining the city's indigenous nightlife. In order to limit the influence of organized crime, Drapeau introduced restrictive licensing and limited opening times, which shut down a number of clubs that hired musicians. After-hours clubs, often the only place musicians could play the “real,” noncommercial jazz, closed.

Many clubs opted to cater to changing tastes and save money by becoming strip bars or rock clubs with canned music. Even the venerable Rockhead's Paradise closed its doors by the 1970s after a failed incarnation as a dance club.

The St. Antoine district began to fail too as the industries that fueled its growth moved away. The community was dealt a succession of near-fatal blows through the 1960s when half the neighbourhood was bulldozed in favour of the Ville Marie Expressway and huge blocks of social housing. Renamed Little Burgundy, the neighbourhood is striving to recover from poverty, unemployment, crime, and an itinerant population. The jazz clubs and show bars are all gone. The only evidence that the neighbourhood was once the creative heart of Canada's most vibrant music scene is a small swath of green space tucked between social housing developments, in the shadow of the massive maze of concrete overpasses—Le Parc de Jazzmen. ■

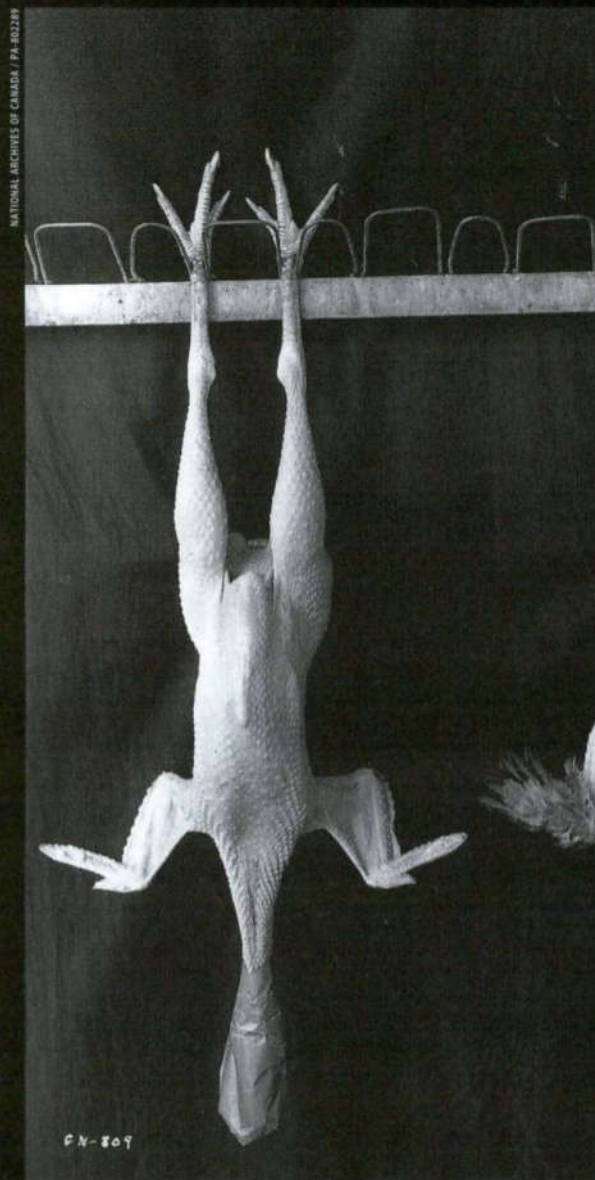
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Swinging in Paradise: The Story of Jazz in Montreal by John Gilmore. Véhicule Press, Montreal, 1988.

The Montreal Jazz Package, three videos celebrating outstanding performers from the Montreal jazz scene: *Show Girls*, *In the Key of Oscar*, and *Oliver Jones in Africa*. National Film Board of Canada, 1999.

Oscar Peterson: A Jazz Sensation, an exhibition at the National Library of Canada, 395 Wellington Street, Ottawa, Ontario. Open until June 23, 2001.

Mark Reynolds is a Montreal writer. His last article, “The Great Canadian Foot Race,” appeared in the August/September 2000 edition of the *Beaver*.



Two birds – one properly plucked and singed, the other not properly plucked, June 23, 1937.

Ox cart on highway near Ship Head.

by R.B. Fleming

Eye on Canada

He was one of the boys, part of the pool of official photographers for the Canadian government assigned to record everything from royal visits to the proper way to pluck a chicken. But in the 1930s and 1940s, when **Frank Tyrell** picked up his camera, he brought to his work an artistry that went beyond everyday documentation.

All photographs by Frank Tyrell, unless otherwise noted.



Frank Tyrell, second from left, with three fellow photographers, circa 1930. Left, H. Flynn; far right, A.J. Gates; second from right, unknown.

"Dear Frank," wrote W.J. Turnbull, the prime minister's principal secretary, on Saturday, October 24, 1942. The prime minister, Turnbull's letter went on to say, had deemed one or two of Frank Tyrell's photographs "not exactly flattering," and asked the photographer to telephone him so that they could discuss which photographs and negatives to "suppress." Although the prime minister noted in his diary that he had enjoyed his visit with opera singer Lucy Monroe, descendant of President James Monroe, and Hollywood actor Walter Pidgeon, born in New Brunswick, no photograph of the day has apparently survived. The negatives were probably destroyed.

What caused the prime minister such anxiety? The rotund and balding William Lyon Mackenzie King was scarcely photogenic from any angle, so it is difficult to think that Frank Tyrell had captured the PM's bad side. Mackenzie King's diary gives no hint of his discomfort. After spending a few minutes in his office, the PM and his two guests emerged from the Centre Block for photographs. Frank Tyrell, following orders, was waiting. The scene was, no doubt, decorous—in prescrum days, no reporter dared to shout questions. Monroe and Pidgeon were "most natural, affable and appreciative of the time given them in conversation," King noted. And Pidgeon had flattered the PM by bringing greetings from Greer Garson, his costar in the newly released wartime movie, *Mrs. Miniver*.

In 1942, Frank Tyrell was one of about a dozen members of the still photography division of the National Film Board. If history, as Donald Creighton once argued, is the record of an encounter between character and circumstances, then photography

was Tyrell's predestined vocation. He may have inherited his interest in the arts from his father, who had been a bandmaster at a military school in England before migrating to Canada in the last half of the nineteenth century. Later in life, he would take up painting. When he was born, almost sixty years after the invention of the camera in 1839, and almost a decade after the introduction of the small, lightweight Kodak camera in 1888, photography had emerged from the constraints of bulky, sometimes unpredictable equipment and development techniques. It was an art in itself, self-confident, and no longer attempting to emulate one period of art or another. In 1896, the year of Tyrell's birth, for the first time, photographs were added to the collection of a major museum. During the first decades of the twentieth century, the camera gained even more respect, thanks to photographers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson, Brassai, and André Kertész, famous for their portraits and scenes of Paris street life in the 1920s and 1930s, and Alfred Stieglitz, who was an eye on both sides of the Atlantic before and after the turn of the twentieth century.

A photography studio on Ottawa's Sparks Street provided Tyrell with his first camera experience in the 1920s. By 1927, however, he had joined the still photography division of the Canadian Government Motion Picture Bureau. Founded eight years earlier as the Exhibits and Publicity Bureau of the Department of Trade and Commerce, its purpose was to promote Canada's natural resources, tourist attractions, and industries at home and abroad. During the 1920s, the bureau's silent movies found eager audiences across Canada and around the world. Meanwhile, the lesser-known stills division found markets in newspapers and magazines, such as the weekly *Canadian National Pictorial*, as well as in international publications. Due to the low production and distribution costs of still pictures and increased newspaper and magazine demand, the market grew throughout the Depression.

The Motion Picture Bureau had been conceived as an eye of government. One of its roles was to publicize government itself, including officials, ministers, and buildings, particularly in the nation's capital. The bureau was to give power an image, to make it visible. The idea was not unique to the Canadian federal government. In nineteenth-century France, governments used photography to record monuments. As early as the 1880s, Canadian railway companies commissioned landscape painters, then cin-

Woollen underwear showing textile damage, May 1932.



NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / PA 402278

Frank Tyrell was a modest man, little interested in promoting himself. Furthermore, his subject matter—defence, industry, and tourist attractions—may have doomed him to anonymity.



Spinning at Rivière-à-Claude,
Gaspé, Quebec, July 1936.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / PA 60151



Gaspé fisherman with drying
codfish, July 1936.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA / PA 60151



U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's goodwill visit to Canada. The photograph was taken outside the governor general's residence at the Citadel in Quebec City, July 31, 1936. From third left to right: Lord Tweedsmuir, FDR, James Roosevelt, Lady Tweedsmuir, William Lyon Mackenzie King, Mrs. Norman Armour, and Norman Armour, U.S. Ambassador to Canada.



Movie star Shirley Temple, age sixteen, with Mackenzie King at the official opening of Canada's seventh Victory Loan Drive, October 21, 1944. The prime minister wrote in his diary that he was quite taken with this "young girl of great charm" whom he found "very pretty, very natural."

The Earl of Athlone, governor general of Canada between 1940 and 1946, his wife, Princess Alice, and Princess Juliana, arriving at the Elgin Theatre, Ottawa, for the Canadian premier of *The 49th Parallel*.

Mackenzie King with Queen Elizabeth on the terrace of Banff Springs Hotel, May, 1939. As photographers covering the Royal Visit, including Tyrell, pooled most of their work, the author of this image is unknown. Upon examination, it reveals an airbrushing of King George VI, who in other versions stands on the queen's left. Tyrell may or may not have been the photographer who did the prime minister the favour of removing the king.



Tyrell discovered that the prime minister had a decided view of the role of photographs in his own self-promotion.

ematographers and photographers, to promote land sales and tourism. In Toronto, Arthur Goss was hired in 1911 to photograph city properties such as water intake pipes, sewers, bridges, and the city hall, as well as the men in charge. The First World War, however, redefined propaganda, making it a more insidious concept. By the 1930s, governments in the Soviet Union, Germany, and the United States were using photographs, as well as films, to promote their particular systems, ideologies, and programs.

In May 1939, with another war looming, the Canadian government established the National Film Board to serve the need for imperial solidarity through charismatic and widely distributed films. (Film, John Grierson, the NFB's first commissioner, once stated, was a pulpit from which he preached propaganda.) Two years later, the film division of the Motion Picture Bureau was transferred to the NFB, which had been placed under the Ministry of National War Services. The stills division followed shortly after, and Tyrell began to photograph war-related subjects such as defence guns in Halifax, nickel mining in Sudbury, and Victory Loan Drives.

He also discovered that the prime minister, like other wartime leaders (Hitler and Stalin, for example, had unsatisfactory photographs either destroyed or airbrushed) had a decided view of the role of photographs in his own self-promotion. If his photographs of King with Lucy Monroe and Walter Pidgeon had caused discomfort, his photographs of the PM with Shirley Temple on Parliament Hill on October 21, 1944 were more to his liking. "I was greatly attracted by Shirley Temple," King noted. At sixteen, the actress's childhood image of purity and innocence remained unsullied. The occasion was the launch of the Seventh Victory Loan Drive. Tyrell snapped Mackenzie King and Temple as they arrived at the reviewing stand in front of the Peace Tower. After a few words to adoring fans, they strolled towards their limousine. Over at the Château Laurier, a large, enthusiastic crowd, mostly young people, rushed the couple. An exhausted Mackenzie King, his heart beating fast, "literally had to carry [Temple] along from the front door through the gathering to the elevator."

One of Tyrell's contemporaries was Yousuf Karsh, who opened a studio in Ottawa in 1932. While Karsh's name remains as well known as his images, Frank Tyrell's is forgotten. He was a modest man, little interested in promoting himself. Further-

more, his subject matter—defence, industry, and tourist attractions—may have doomed him to anonymity. No matter the high degree of talent and artistry, photographs of the tomato-growing and canning industry near Chatham, of printing and binding at the Department of Printing and Stationery, or of the Central Experimental Farm's proper way to pluck a chicken, were not likely to gain the photographer much recognition. Even when the subject matter was a prominent personality, such as a governor general, an important event such as Mackenzie King and Pierpont Morgan signing the 1942 agreement to build the Alaska Highway, or a well-known building or location such as the Peace Tower or Rideau Hall, the photographer remained anonymous. Yet the photographs themselves are evocative, displaying an artistry that goes beyond everyday documentation.

And when it came to images that have left a lasting impression, such as photographs of King George and Queen Elizabeth during the Royal Tour of 1939 or those of Mackenzie King, Roosevelt, and Churchill at the Quebec Conference of 1943, the photographers assigned to the tour pooled their work. Only one of about a thousand images from these two events has been identified as Tyrell's. Thus it is not clear which photographer did Mackenzie King the favour of airbrushing the king from the photograph of the queen smiling at a prime ministerial joke at the Banff Springs Hotel on May 26, 1939.

Tyrell's legacy, perhaps as many as two thousand images, show his wide range of subject matter, from sides of beef at the experimental farm to the 1927 visit of Charles Lindbergh to Ottawa. He photographed the R100 dirigible at St. Hubert in 1930, maple sugaring in the Outaouais, dirt roads and ox carts in Gaspé, prominent Ottawa landmarks, the skyline of Halifax, and views of Hamilton and Matane, on the south shore of the St. Lawrence. Official Ottawa portraits include King's Printer J.O. Patenaude and Postmaster General William Mulock.

Frank Tyrell remained with the National Film Board until the early 1950s when he became a photographer at the experimental farm in Ottawa. He retired in the late 1950s and died in Ottawa in 1979. Canadians can rejoice that most of the photographic images of this eye on Canada have outlived him. ■

R.B. Fleming is a freelance historian living in Argyle, Ontario. He is currently working on a book about the 1939 Royal Tour, for which Frank Tyrell was an official photographer.

In a storm, in the early morning hours of Ash Wednesday, February 18, 1942, two U.S. Navy ships smashed against the cliffs of Newfoundland's Burin Peninsula. What happened next is a testament to the courage of the American sailors and the gallantry of the Newfoundland miners who came to their rescue.



Anatomy of a Rescue

by Barry Ries

All photographs by Ena Farrell Edwards, unless otherwise noted.

St. Lawrence is a small town of about five thousand people, an outpost on southern Newfoundland's rugged Burin Peninsula. A few kilometres from the town, surrounded on three sides by towering granite cliffs, lies Chamber Cove. It's one of seventy-eight-year-old Levi Pike's favourite spots.

"It's a marvellous, peaceful place," Pike says. "It's the quietest place in the world, buffered by the cliff. I sit and bask in the sun even on a winter's day, contemplating what could have happened if things had been done different."

The most dramatic, tragic, and noble event in the history of St. Lawrence took place on February 18, 1942, a stormy day when the waves were pounding against the cliffs of Chamber Cove, tossing spume so high the bitter winter wind carried it up and over to coat the grass and stunted trees above with glitter like that left by freezing rain.

On that day, despite the best efforts of then nineteen-year-old Pike and many other men of St. Lawrence and nearby Lawn, 110 of the 146 U.S. Navy officers and sailors from the USS *Truxton* lost their lives in Chamber Cove. Only a little way down the rocky Atlantic coast, 93 of the 233 officers and crew of the navy cargo ship USS *Pollux* also died.

In mid-February 1942, the war was two and a half years old. For the Allies it was going badly. In the previous month, German U-boats operating off the American coast had sunk fifteen ships, including ten oil tankers, and another fifteen vessels had

been sunk in the North Atlantic off Canada and Newfoundland.

U-boats were on everybody's mind when the *Pollux*, an American supply ship, escorted by the old four-stack destroyer *Truxton* and the modern destroyer *Wilkes* (the flagship of this little convoy), rendezvoused off Casco Bay, Maine, on February 15. Their destination was the new U.S. base at Argentia, about fifty-five kilometres northeast of St. Lawrence on Placentia Bay—a three-day trip. As they travelled northeast, the weather grew steadily worse. By the time the convoy reached Newfoundland, a full gale was blowing. For thirty-six hours neither sun nor stars had been visible. Unsuccessful attempts to determine their position by triangulating on radio stations drove navigators to try establishing their position by dead reckoning, using last-known position, course, speed, and compass readings. Dead reckoning may work in midocean, but when approaching land it's less successful, especially when the course is complicated by zigzagging to confuse preying submarines. And the weather was foul. "The seas were right up to the bridge deck, forty-two feet," recalls Henry (Hank) Strauss, a *Pollux* storekeeper, who was twenty-seven at the time. "The snow was blinding. It was freezing."

The three ships were supposed to be travelling together, following a base course that would take them into Placentia Bay, then northeast to Argentia on the Avalon Peninsula. But it was difficult for

The USS *Truxton* was one of two destroyers accompanying the supply ship USS *Pollux* (below) from Portland, Maine, to the U.S. Navy base at Argentia, on Newfoundland's Avalon Peninsula. They were blown off course in a heavy winter storm and ran aground against rocky coast fifty-five kilometres southwest of their destination.

The rescue (upper left) involved pulling men up the icy cliffs above Chamber Cove, where 110 U.S. Navy officers and sailors from the USS *Truxton* lost their lives.



NAVAL HISTORICAL FOUNDATION / NH 45232



COURTESY CHARLES R. MARLOW

The USS *Truxton* (far left), one of two destroyers accompanying the supply ship USS *Pollux* (left).

The water was frigid and the men had trouble keeping their heads above the oil. Some tried to swim, desperately plunging about in the freezing waves. Others shrieked in terror, screamed at their shipmates to stay onboard.

them to hold their positions. Even after night fell and the ships stopped zigzagging, the *Wilkes's* radar showed the vessels wandering back and forth in relation to each other. What nobody knew was that the radar, installed on the *Wilkes* on December 31, was unreliable, and that the current and wind were pushing all three ships to the northwest.

At 4:09 A.M., the *Wilkes* ran aground on the southwest corner of Lawn Head, near the extreme south of the Burin Peninsula. One minute later the *Truxton* ran aground almost five kilometres east, in Chamber Cove. At 4:17, the *Pollux* piled onto the rocks between the other two ships, about a kilometre and a half east of the *Wilkes*.

Strauss, who was in the top tier of three bunks onboard the *Pollux*, was thrown to the deck. Thinking the boat had hit a destroyer, he rushed out to his battle station, the searchlight on the flying bridge. The light was turned on and he and a fellow sailor looked up at the cliffs and started to laugh. "We thought, 'Those stupid sons of bitches couldn't even keep us off land.'"

The *Truxton* backed off and initially cleared the rocks, but then hit them again, this time even harder. The storm pushed the stern over and a big rock came through the hull into the aft engine room. While the *Wilkes* managed to back off the rocks and escape to deep water with no loss of life, the *Pollux* and *Truxton* were doomed.

The *Truxton* remained on an even keel for a short time. Even though waves were breaking over the deck, the ship didn't appear too damaged. Crew members thought they would be able to return to Boston for repairs. But the weather worsened. Then the stern broke off. "We heard the big crack and you could see it wagging," says Fireman Ed McInerney. "That was our living quarters, and it separated from the rest of the ship."

The water was only six metres deep and the ship, nine metres wide, couldn't sink. But the wind was blowing at sixty-five to seventy-five kilometres per hour. Lifeboats were launched, but they smashed on the rocks. As morning wore



on, the *Truxton* settled, and men huddled on deck wherever they could find shelter. About noon a particularly large wave broke over the ship and took about thirty men with it. They didn't drown. They were smashed on the cliffs.

Later that morning a plane flew over. Everybody thought help was coming. It didn't. With waves breaking over the *Truxton*, the captain passed the word that anybody who thought they could make the beach could try. Many men jumped off, hoping to make it to shore in the icy and churning water. "All of a sudden we started seeing dead bodies in the water," recalls Joseph Vendola, then a twenty-year-old carpenter's mate, who was pulled out of the water by a friend.

By the time McInerney got off the *Truxton*, the ship was on its side. "The waves would come in threes. You'd stand up, pound your feet, pound your hands, then you'd see the waves again and hang on. There was a boom that would lie flat against the side of the ship. Four guys had laid the boom across their stomachs so they wouldn't get washed overboard. They froze to death right there."

Eventually, two men managed to paddle a life raft through the seething, oil-covered sea to the rocky shore.

St. Lawrence men (below) pull a casket from Chamber Cove.

Bodies of the American sailors (below, centre) awaiting burial.



Icy sea water not only imperilled the stranded sailors. Leaking oil, sometimes as thick as thirty centimetres, further jeopardized the chances of struggling to shore. This oil-soaked sailor (left) is one who survived.

After recuperating for several minutes, they began hauling in wet and heavy line, wrapping it around a large rock.

Onboard, Seaman Edward Bergeron, eighteen, volunteered to be among the first across. He and about ten other men slid down a rope onto a raft and began hauling the raft towards shore, pulling on the lifeline, hand over hand, down troughs and through waves that buried them to their chests in icy and oily water. They made it. The raft was pulled back to the ship and another party of ten men pulled themselves to shore. But while the raft was being pulled back to the ship for a third load, the line attached to the raft wrapped itself around the lifeline, which was dipping below the surface. The lifeline was ordered cut on shore so that the raft could be pulled back to the ship. But then the cut lifeline snagged on something below the surface and couldn't be freed. The link to shore was lost.

Bergeron and three other men then began to climb the sixty-metre cliff above them. At the top, they found a shed filled with hay. While the three others collapsed inside, exhausted, Bergeron pressed on, intent on finding help.

In the town of St. Lawrence, many people were going to morning church services. It was Ash Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the *Pollux*, pounded broadside by huge seas, began to break up. A huge crack appeared aft of No. 3 cargo hold. Captain Hugh Turney told his officers to pass the word: Anybody who thought they could swim to shore was permitted to try. Men began to go over the side, sliding down lines or scrambling down cargo nets. Suddenly scores of men were flailing about in the churning, oil-covered sea between the ship and the rocky shore.

It was a mistake. The water was frigid and the men had trouble keeping their heads above the oil. Some tried to swim, desperately plunging about in the freezing waves. Others shrieked in terror, screamed at their shipmates to stay onboard. Some tried to climb back up the nets but were swept away. Men were dashed onto the rocks or smashed against the ship's side. Some disappeared beneath the oil, which was as thick as a third of a metre in some places. Horrified, Turney ordered everybody still onboard to stay there.

But one of the men in the water, Storekeeper Alfred Dupuy, had been luckier than most. He managed to crawl into a half-filled lifeboat, and when his attempts to paddle it proved futile, he jumped back into the sea and pushed shoreward, fighting nausea from the oil in his mouth and nose, struggling until he finally collapsed in shallow water. Realizing he'd die if he stayed there, Dupuy pulled himself higher onto the rocks.

After many unsuccessful tries, a light line was finally thrown to him from the ship. Dupuy picked it up, but unable

The women [talked] about the trouble they were having getting the oil off a certain steward's mate. "I tried kerosene, gasoline, I can't get the black off him."

"Ladies," he said, "I'm a Negro."

to hold it with his freezing hands, he put the line in his mouth. On the *Pollux*, a heavier line was tied to the light line, and Dupuy—on hands and knees, line between his teeth—crawled higher. With nothing to tie the line to, and lacking the strength to pull it in, he began to turn, winding the line around his body, pulling in the heavier line. Then, with the heavier line ashore, Dupuy found a rock and circled it, wrapping the rope around as best he could before collapsing.

The cheering men on the *Pollux* rigged a bosun's chair to the rope and sent over a test bundle of food and clothing. The bundle made it, and men followed. The *Pollux* was gradually abandoned, and most of the men who went across didn't get their feet wet. They were, unfortunately, still far from safety.

Ena Farrell Edwards was a seventeen-year-old in St. Lawrence on February 18, 1942. Her brother, Howard Farrell, was assistant manager of the Iron Springs Mine, and it was to that fluorspar mine, less than two kilometres from Chamber Cove, that Bergeron stumbled that morning around eight o'clock, as the men were changing shifts. He had seen a light through the blizzard.

Word spread quickly. Edwards, who had been returning from Mass when she heard the news, went to the general store where she worked and passed out all the canned soup, milk, tea, coffee, and other supplies until they were gone. Then she gathered her friends together to collect long johns, mitts, scarves and other warm clothing door-to-door, and pack them onto a big eight-seat toboggan. The townsmen, meanwhile, carried ropes and axes to the site. A boat went out from the St. Lawrence harbour, but the seas were too mountainous to get near the ships.

Levi Pike, who had gone home to bed at the end of his shift at the mine, unaware of the disaster, was awoken by his mother at noon. When he reached Chamber Cove, he was shocked by what he saw. "It was one hell of a sight to see a ship like that. Men were huddled up on the hull. Once in a while a heavier sea than usual would come over and you'd see two or three heads in the water."

Some of the St. Lawrence men tried to stretch a long hawser from one side of the cove to the other over the wreck. But the wind was too fierce. "There were a hundred men at each end trying to stretch it out and they couldn't do it," Pike recalls. "The wind would almost take it out of your hands."

The few *Truxton* survivors who had reached the rocky beach, and the dozens more who jumped in and swam for shore when the Newfoundlanders arrived, were helped up the cliffs by the men of St. Lawrence, who climbed down to the water, pulled men from the oily surf, and tied ropes to them for the ascent. John Kelly, at the time a nineteen-year-old trucker, remembers about fifty men pulling on a one-inch rope, a trap mooring. Two ropes were joined together, and each weighed close to thirty kilograms. "You had to pull with every pound that was in you. We were all tired and hungry."

The rescue continued through the daylight hours. Dark settled in by the time the dead bodies were pulled into shore and dragged up the cliff. The *Truxton* survivors were taken by horse and sleigh or truck to a large building on the Iron Springs Mine property, where women from the town

stripped them down, scrubbed off the oil as best they could, and fed them hot soup and coffee.

Jim Seamans, then a twenty-two-year-old ensign, remembers being stripped of his oil-soaked clothes and being given something to wear. And he remembers the women talking about the trouble they were having getting the oil off a certain steward's mate. "I tried kerosene, gasoline, I can't get the black off him," he reports the women saying.

"The sailor, Lanier Phillips, then piped up: 'Ladies,' he said, 'I'm a Negro.'"

Seamans was taken to the home of Lillian and Leo Loder, which he remembers as a very simple house. "She didn't know what to do. Finally, she said, 'Would you like an orange?' I said 'Yes.' So they went to the store and bought me an orange."

Two of the surviving American sailors, photographed a few days after their rescue. In the years since the war, many of the survivors made commemorative visits to St. Lawrence. In 1954, the American government donated a small hospital to the town, since replaced. In 1992, fifty years after the *Truxton* and *Pollux* sank, a statue was raised in the town to memorialize the rescue effort.



While *Truxton* survivors were being given food, drink, and shelter, about 120 men from the *Pollux*—most of the crew who had made it off the ship on the bosun's chair—were trying to stay alive on a rock shelf barely ten metres square between the water's edge and the cliff face. The waves were still over six metres high and the incoming tide was strong enough to pull some men back into the water. Strauss describes the men clustered with him shoulder-to-shoulder on the ledge "like horses in a storm in a field, tails between their legs, butt to the wind."

"We sang World War I songs, and 'There's a Long, Long, Trail A-Winding.' Somebody passed a can of Spam around. Most of us figured we'd had it. We were resigned to it. You can't go through that for eighteen hours without having a lot of things deadened."

Men were yelling for help and a few people had flashlights, but as the winter night drew in, the situation looked hopeless. But then, a few hours after sunset, a couple of men from the village of Lawn arrived with horses, sleds, axes and ropes. At one o'clock, they had heard by telephone of a wreck at Lawn Head, a rugged sixteen kilometres distant, a five- or six-hour journey, and had set off. "All of a sudden," Strauss recalls, "I heard something, and I saw somebody being hauled up. That was unbelievable."

The handful of men from Lawn were soon joined by St. Lawrence men and by navy medical personnel, who had landed at St. Lawrence from a minesweeper. They lit a small fire in a hollow at the top of the cliffs and directed survivors to gather around it.

Funeral processions became a familiar sight in St. Lawrence in the days following the *Truxton* and *Pollux* disaster.

Though some men were warmed by blankets, several died of hypothermia and exposure. Marlow, a twenty-three-year-old storekeeper, tried in vain to save a shipmate. "I tried to get him up, get him moving. I'd massage him to keep him alive. He died in my arms."

Some of the men who were strong enough trekked to the Iron Springs Mine on foot through a curtain of snow and fog, following the shoreline. In some places, they crawled on hands and knees, fearing they might otherwise step off the cliff in the darkness. Other men were brought to the mine the next morning. Exhausted, and in some cases oil-blinded, they were stripped, washed, and fed. A few men had swallowed so much oil, they couldn't keep any food down.

Nineteen sailors, including Strauss, were decorated for heroism. There were no medals, however, for the men of St. Lawrence and Lawn. In gratitude for the heroic efforts of the people of St. Lawrence, the United States government gave the town a small hospital, since replaced. In 1992, a statue was unveiled in St. Lawrence, *Echoes of Valour*, depicting a miner, hand outstretched to a sailor in distress.

Few rescuers are left alive today. Most of the men worked in the mines, and many of them died in the small hospital, victims of radon gas. But the survivors of the shipwrecks, many of whom have made two or three trips to St. Lawrence to personally thank the people who gave them their lives, won't forget them. Says Seamans: "The people in St. Lawrence deserve all our heartfelt thanks. If they hadn't come out we would have lost everybody." ■

Barry Ries is a former banker and journalist who is currently a writer in the public affairs department of Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo. He is also working toward his master's degree in history.

About the photographs

E na Farrell Edwards was seventeen years old when the *Truxton* and the *Pollux* were wrecked on the shores near her home in St. Lawrence, Newfoundland. Two months before, she had received a five-dollar Kodak Brownie camera as a Christmas gift. When she and other St. Lawrence women were finished ministering to the cold and hungry survivors of the shipwreck, she skied three kilometres through snow in the waning hours of the afternoon to the site of the *Truxton* rescue to capture the event on film. The next morning, she photographed the *Pollux*. The episode, she realized, was history in the making.

As a result of her enterprise, her photographs are the only visual record of the disaster. And her efforts might have been in vain, if she hadn't stood up to U.S. Navy officials, disturbed by a naval disaster coming so soon on the heels of Pearl Harbour. She refused their demand to hand over the film. Associated Press later developed the photographs, and Miss Farrell (as she was at the time) had the thrill of seeing her pictures in the pages of Canadian newspapers. With the money she received from AP, she bought a more sophisticated camera, but it was later stolen during a visit to New York. The Kodak Brownie, however, endures—it is displayed in St. Lawrence's community museum for all to see. ■





GIL PARKER

GIL PARKER

B.C. ARCHIVES / D-03973

Steel and reinforced concrete rule today. But in the early days of railway bridge building, timber was king. None more so than in British Columbia, where great timber trestle bridges, monuments to the structural engineer's art, were built to span

Born-Again Bridges

by Gil Parker

Roland Brown walks along the railroad grade toward Cowichan Lake, checking on the old trestles. Next time he'll have his truck and tools, so he can fix some of the ladders down the steep creek banks, or respace deck ties to fill in holes left by rot and age. A retired forest worker who volunteers for the Cowichan Valley Museum, Brown has lived in the Duncan area since the early 1960s. He wants to keep these crossings as routes for hikers and fishermen, and because they are links to a past when railroads were a spider web blanketing Vancouver Island and much of British Columbia.

Incorporating timber trestles, sometimes with steel elements, these

railway bridges are historic examples of early railway engineering, unique monuments of the B.C. landscape. Now, heritage preservationists are working with all levels of government to preserve these structures, so essential to the linear hiking trails that the abandoned railways offer.

The grade Brown is walking was built by the original Canadian Northern Pacific Railway that struggled to be born during the years of World War I. The route from Victoria to Port Alberni was to travel inland through dense forest of Douglas fir, hemlock, and cedar to the west coast to get at stands of sitka spruce essential for warplane construction. But the line never got as far as Port Alberni. While the roadbed

Photos, left to right: Holt Creek trestle bridge; The Kinsol trestle bridge over the Koksilah River, which was closed in 1999 and remains in need of repair; The Niagara Canyon trestle bridge on the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway on Vancouver Island, period photo; A railway bridge over the Cowichan River.



GIL PARKER

the gorges and chasms of a jagged landscape. Today, more shoes than steel wheels cross these bridges. Many have passed from rails to trails. Still, they remain what they always were – compelling forest icons.

was built most of the way, steel shortages delayed rail-laying; only six kilometres of rail were done by Armistice Day, November 11, 1918. After that, as part of the new Canadian National Railway, the rails stretched to Cowichan Lake, Youbou, and finally in 1928, to Kissinger, at the lake's west end.

The trestle bridge looms out of the mist of a West Coast winter, leads us out of claustrophobic forest over a swollen river, a vertiginous drop to the rocks and rushing water. Unprotected by handrails, but massive in structural redundancy, the timber posts and bracing reach down through the regrowing bush to foundations on concrete – or simply to mudsills, now rotting into the soil. Bracing hangs on a single bolt, struts are broken or sagging, but the main vertical frames appear intact, supporting the deck beams of creosoted wood or rusted steel. The rails are long gone, but we walk on the ties, ig-

norning the moving water far below.

The passengers of the 1920s must have felt that vertigo, looking out the windows of the self-powered gas railway car as it glided through stands of untouched conifers, then over the high trestle. The sixty-pound rail, 30 per cent lighter than the rails of most main lines, added to the peculiar rocking gait of the car. The locals dubbed the car "Galloping Goose," a name now attached to the Victoria-to-Leachtown hiking trail along the old grade.

The main line ran from Victoria to Youbou on the north side of Cowichan Lake, carrying freight and timber as well as passenger cars. In 1924, an elev-

The wooden trestles were built from the timbers of the forest through which they passed. They were symbolic of the burgeoning forest economy; anything could be built with the massive trees.

en-kilometre spur line named Tidewater joined the line to Cowichan Bay on the eastern shore of Vancouver Island. Two freight trains per week, and as many as three logging trains per day, crossed these trestles. At the peak, eight logging companies worked along the railroad.

The gas-powered cars ran for only a few years, as competition from the Esquimalt & Nanaimo Railway forced an end to the unique passenger service in 1931. For over forty years the CNR continued to be a major transport route for logs and lumber. However, by 1965, decreasing logging volumes and competition from highway freight carriers

cut into business. Two trestles near Victoria failed safety tests and that sector was closed.

Ralph Morris was regional engineer of bridges and structures for the CNR when he retired fourteen years ago, but he hasn't stopped thinking about "his" bridges yet. Spending his entire professional life in the bridge department, Morris wrestled with the problems of the railway's structures in the West: how to keep them safe for increasingly heavy rail traffic. Due to the uncertainty of future business on Island lines, he always had problems getting capital funds. Originally, the wooden trestles were built from the timbers of local trees. They were symbolic of the burgeoning forest economy; anything could be built with the massive trees. Still, regular maintenance was needed. Whenever they had to repair the trestles, Morris specified creosote-treated timber. He wanted the structures to last.

And they have. The Kinsol trestle spans the Koksilah River at mile 51.1 (from Victoria). At 38 metres high and 188 metres long, Kinsol's centre span was reconstructed in 1935 to more accurately fit the alignment of the track. New trusses were erected just above the river on concrete piers and a full trestle built above, the continuous trestle matching the long sweeping curve of the track. Since abandonment, the trestle has suffered more from vandals than from age, with two fires causing damage on the deck.

Trestles such as Holt Creek, at mile 59.7, were progressively improved using treated timbers. "We could do it out of operating money," Morris recalls. "If we had had another year or two we could have finished." The creek bed is spanned by steel beams originally fabricated in 1887, then pirated from two disused bridges near Sidney, on a branch north of Victoria. But when the main line closed, the central timber trestle remained untreated.

Seldom did structural problems cause accidents. But in 1937 at Wolf Creek, mile 33.9 near Leachtown, runoff water and debris caused the footings to give way when Robert "Frosty" Winters drove his train across, and the locomotive crashed down. Crew members cut telephone wires to call for help for the injured engineer.

The most suitable ambulance was another train, but despite their efforts, Winters died in hospital in Victoria.

The CNR upgraded to larger steam engines like the M3-Consolidated and, after 1958, to 1,200-horsepower diesels. This meant heavier engines pulling bigger trains, loads that compressed the top caps over the piles. So, the tracks continually needed shimming.

The south section to mile 57.9 was finally closed in 1979, and from Youbou east to the ocean in 1988. Some members of the train crew took their wives along for the last ride down to Cowichan Bay. A perpetually troublesome creek at mile 62.5 had flooded gravel onto the track, causing a minor derailment. The crew and their wives had to walk through the night to Deerholme, about eight kilometres away. Returning the next day by speeder, a small cart used by maintenance crews, the wives didn't want to cross Holt Creek trestle, which they had happily walked across in the dark.

Today, these sagging structures of a bygone era are regaining life. On the Galloping Goose Regional Trail near Victoria, the high, steel trestle at Charters Creek has a new pedestrian deck. Todd Creek's timber trestle has been repaired, capable of carrying foot, cycle, and equestrian traffic and, of course, its own substantial weight. Both have solid handrails. Further north, the old grade, now owned by the province, is the future route of the Trans Canada Trail, scheduled to open next year.

There is a renewed interest in railroading on Vancouver Island. The E&N makes a daily run up-island, in summer for tourists and in winter for skiers. On the same line, the Pacific Wilderness Railway, using old CNR coaches, makes three tourist trips a day up scenic Malahat Mountain above fiordlike Saanich inlet. The old CNR roadbed and the stalwart trestles are being used by the modern Galloping Goose Trail, and further north, they will soon become part of the Trans Canada Trail. The timber structures of the original railway, the trestles that engineers like Ralph Morris carefully guarded for decades, will regain their status as enduring forest icons.

Gil Parker is a structural engineer and freelance writer. He lives in Victoria, B.C.

Reviews

Featured Books

■ **The Spinster & the Prophet: Florence Deeks, H.G. Wells & the Mystery of the Purloined Past**

By A.B. McKillop
Macfarlane, Walter &
Ross, Toronto, 2000
477 pp., illus., \$34.99
hardcover

■ **Distant Relations: How My Ancestors Colonized North America**

By Victoria Freeman
McClelland & Stewart,
Toronto, 2000
535 pp., \$39.99 hardcover

His and Herstory

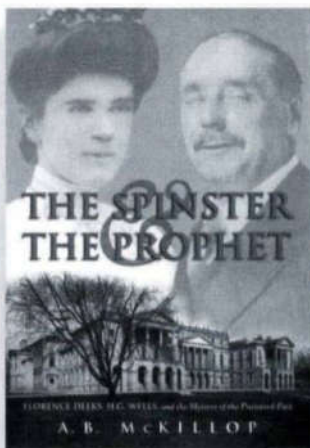
I have only one caveat about this captivating book. As I read, I wished I had not known the end of the story. In the tradition of great courtroom dramas, like Terence Rattigan's *The Winslow Boy*, in *The Spinster & the Prophet* Brian McKillop skillfully builds the tension as a tangled law case wends its way through the corridors of justice. The dry bones of legal arguments and evidence are enlivened by intriguing personalities and an engrossing narrative. There is an underdog, and there are several villains. Alongside deceit and prejudice, there is a deep reverence for British justice. Every reader must root for the underdog before reaching judgment. But then ...

The underdog is Florence Deeks, a fifty-year-old Canadian woman who decided, in 1914, to write a book. Florence's subject, the role of women in history, seems to have emerged in her imagination as a result of two circumstances: the horrifying carnage taking place in Europe and the emergence of a new consciousness amongst women. Florence herself was no banner-waving suffragette: she, her mother, and two sisters lived quietly in a house on Farnham Avenue, for which her successful engineer-brother paid the bills. But the issue that nibbled away at Florence, a former history teacher, was the absence of women from most history books. So she settled down in the College Street branch of the Toronto Public Library to discover how women had contributed to the evolution of human society. "A very serious game had begun—her private game," writes McKillop. "One that saw her ransack scholarly and general works of history, daring them to mention women and teasing the smallest bit of evidence about her own sex from the text, anything at all that spoke to woman's place in history."

Today, courses on women's history are available in most universities, and Canadian schoolchildren learn about Nellie McClung before they have heard of Sir Sandford Fleming. This makes Florence's quest seem banal. At the time, however, it was groundbreaking. And Florence's boldness is all the more impressive given that she was the quintessentially powerless individual within the Canadian middle class of

the period. Unmarried, dependent on her brother's goodwill, and with only a teacher's certificate and no patrons within the academic community, she was that all-too-easily-dismissed stereotype: a spinster. She peeks out from the back row of the Women's Art Association of Canada 1909 group photo, reproduced in *The Spinster & The Prophet*: a gawky figure in an overlarge hat, her thin lips pressed tightly together. The other researchers at the Toronto Public Library may not even have noticed the unsmiling figure, quietly scribbling away at one of the library's long oak tables.

Florence's self-imposed task took her four years. She produced a book that, in her words, described, "the work and influence of woman in weaving up the story of the human race—the web of human history." The act of writing this book had been a struggle for her, since she was not a professional writer and had little knowledge of schools of historical interpretation. She dragged women into the centre of the action, whether it was doctrinal revolution ("The family home—



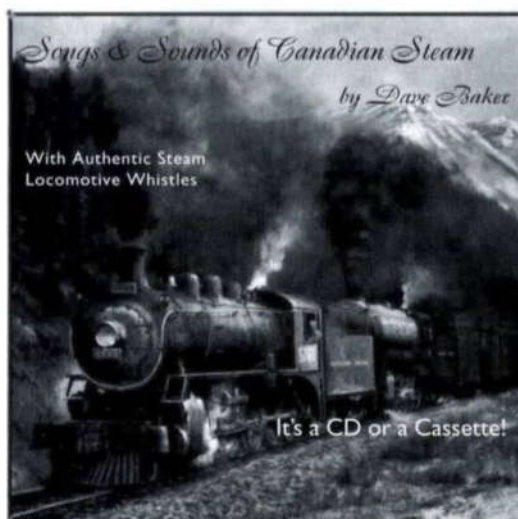
not the Renaissance—made Luther what he was") or the success of the British Empire ("The sovereign power of Victoria was exercised with a loving and judicious firmness that worked wonders"). The tone of her 185,000-word manuscript was too strident for readers of her period, and her prose too clumsy to engage the interest of powerful editors. Yet

Florence's achievement was considerable. She had reconceived human history from a hitherto ignored point-of-view. She had written a Whiggish history with a difference—she argued that the impediment to progress in politics and society was the perpetuation of patriarchy and the incessant aggression of men in power.

Florence parcelled up her manuscript and took it to John Saul, a senior editor at Macmillan Company of Canada. She spent the next seven months waiting for Macmillan's verdict on her tome.

There is no more helpless individual in publishing, whether the year is 1918 or 2001, than the neophyte author with no knowledge of the industry. Flo-

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rence's misfortune was that she was the colonial outsider, whose chosen canvas—the history of the world—had recently engaged the interest of H.G. Wells, the metropolitan insider and one of the most successful authors in the English-speaking world. In 1918, fifty-two-year-old Wells was already the author of a dozen books, including *The Time Machine*, *The Invisible Man*, and *The War of the Worlds*. He was widely regarded as a prophet of the new century. A notorious philanderer, he treated his second wife Catherine (whom he renamed Jane) as his unpaid researcher, secretary, and business manager. "Wells seemed to absorb women as he absorbed plots and ideas," writes McKillop, "as so much raw material to be manipulated to his own ends. In his furious pursuit of literary success, he thought little of ransacking any source at hand for a good storyline." In his fiction, he ruthlessly ransacked his own life (and rationalized his adulteries). Did he ransack Florence's unpublished manuscript, entitled "The Web of History," for his 1919 nonfiction book, *The Outline of History*?

Florence was convinced that Wells had committed "literary piracy." She sued, and when she lost in the courts in Canada, she took her case to the law lords in London. Her relentless determination was, and remains, breathtaking. Nevertheless, she lost.

But then ... the triumph of McKillop's book is that he has revived Florence's case, and given her the fair-minded hearing she never had during her own lifetime. Eighty years ago, there were too many important men who brushed Florence off. They included H.G. Wells himself; the presidents of the London, New York, and Toronto offices of Macmillan; the Toronto historian Frank Underhill, who trivialized the work of an amateur. Since then, successive commentators, including Hector Charlesworth and Greg Gatenby, have repeated with relish the conventional wisdom about the "dotty spinster."

But McKillop went back to the primary sources, read all the relevant material, took Florence Deeks seriously. Professor of history at Carleton University, McKillop did what old-fashioned and literate historians used to do: he carefully assessed the evi-

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The Beaver

A War on Two Fronts

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men and women
fight against
tyranny in Europe,
only to have their
democratic ideals
violated at home.
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AND
ANDREW PARNABY

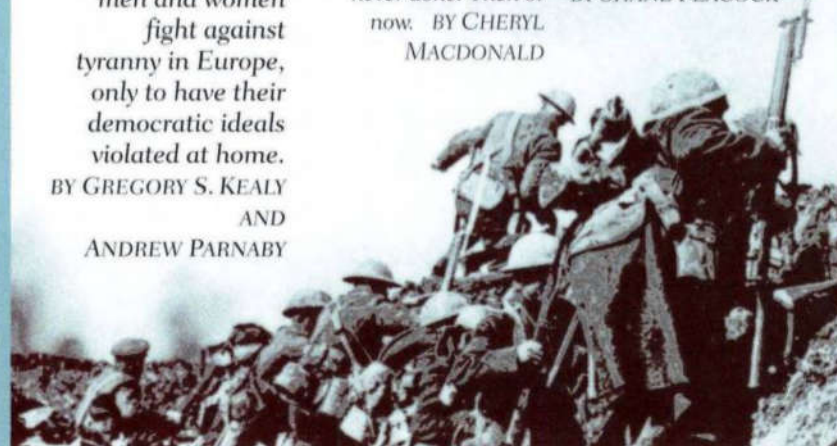
Wash-Day Blues

When it comes
to laundry, a
woman's work is
never done. Then or
now. BY CHERYL
MACDONALD

Vanished

In April 1951, Bill
Barilko scores the goal
that takes the Stanley
Cup for the Maple
Leafs. Four months
later he disappears in
the northern Ontario
wilderness and the
mystery begins ...

BY SHANE PEACOCK



dence for himself, then wrote a book that not only shines a new light on a sequence of events in the past, but also illuminates a whole period. *The Spinster & The Prophet* was deservedly short-listed for a Governor-General's literary award, because it is both an engrossing read and also an extraordinary piece of historical research.

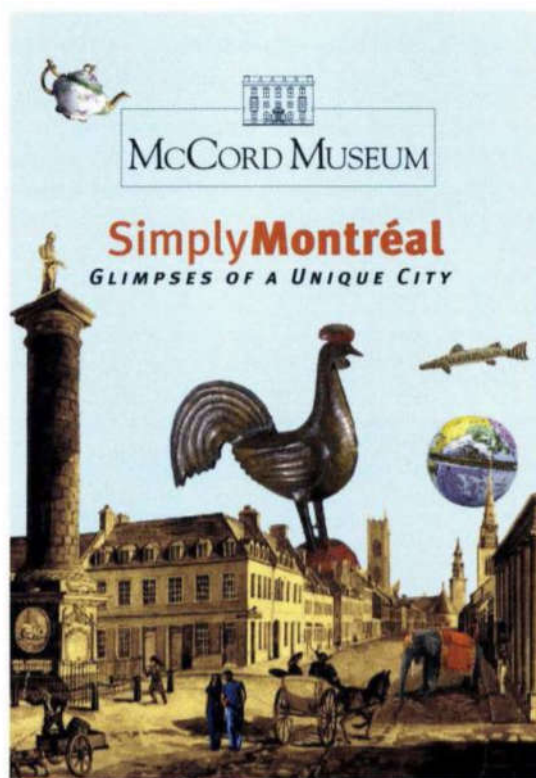
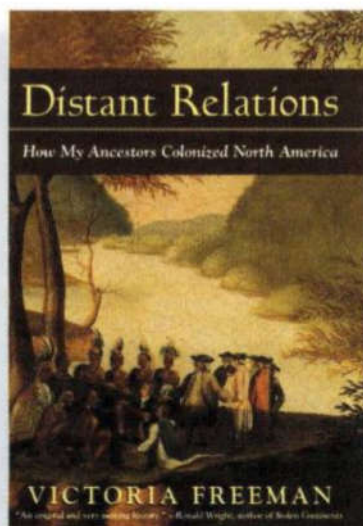
Reviewed by **Charlotte Gray**, whose most recent book is *Sisters in the Wilderness: The Lives of Susannah Moodie and Catharine Parr Traill*.

Family Values

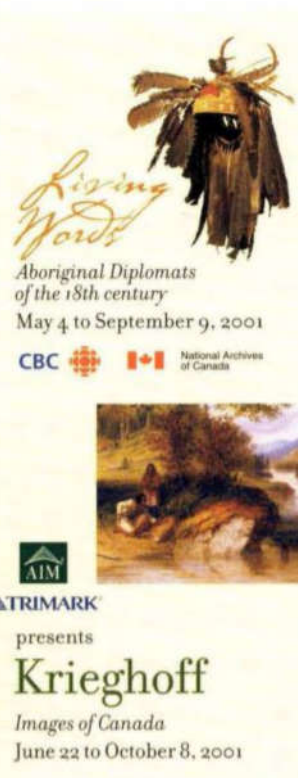
As Canada, yet again, tops the United Nations' list of desirable nations in which to live, it's difficult for we (relative) newcomers not to feel just a teeny bit smug. Yet when Canada is judged on the conditions in which its original inhabitants live, our nation drops dramatically down the list.

For generations, most of us have been able to practise a sweeping cultural denial that allows us to live with this terrible disparity. It was not me, we whisper when conscience pricks, who caused the genocide that resulted in the destruction of more than 90 per cent of native North Americans on the heels of European contact; not me who precipitated the segregation, even apartheid, of our original peoples that exists in Canada even today. It was others, long ago.

In *Distant Relations*, Victoria Freeman disputes this in an innovative



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La Presse **The Gazette**

An Illustrated History of Polo in the Canadian West by Tony Rees

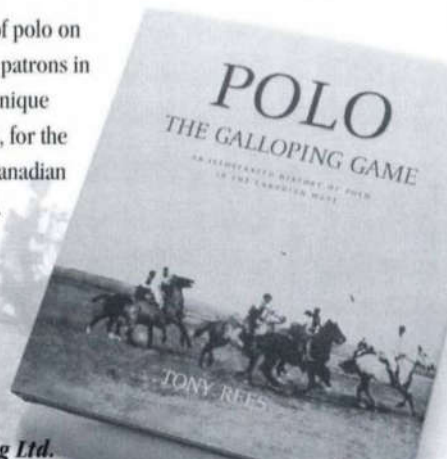
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and courageous manner. Tracing fourteen generations of her own family, who arrived on North America's east coast in the 1630s (about forty-five years before my own ancestors), she turns an array of horrendous incidents into family history, and by extension shows how we are all responsible for our colonial history of repression and our tolerance of injustice today. Moving from Puritan New England through Methodist Southern Ontario and Presbyterian Northern Ontario to Manitoba, she ex-

plores a history that is always patronizing, often ugly, and frequently violent.

Yet this is not a rant. By meticulously (at times painstakingly) painting each period in context, she shows how ordinary, decent folk were able to treat others "in a manner outside the sanctions of their own morality and law." Convinced of their own cultural superiority, they were able to stomach actions, including genocide, that were innately horrifying. Painting the original inhabitants of the lands they

coveted as "savages" (though in many cases the Pequot or Mohegan or Ojibwa in question behaved in a far more civilized manner than did the land-grabbing intruders), they justified a ruthless lawlessness that sometimes leaves the reader almost breathless.

Freeman never forgets—or lets us forget—that this is her family (and by extension many of ours as well) that she is writing about. Throughout the book, she walks a razor edge between condemnation and justification, exposing the actions of her ancestors to the light of twenty-first-century social mores, but always painting each generation in the context of its time and place. The result is remarkably even-handed, and all the more appalling for its nonjudgmental tone.

None of this is virgin territory, though for me the examination of the early decades of Puritan settlement of New England was a revelation. The devastating details of European conquest have been laid out before in such books as *People of Terra Nullius* by Boyce Richardson, *Stolen Continents* by Ronald Wright, or *Wooden Ploughs to Welfare* by Helen Buckley. But this is the first time, at least in my experience, that anyone has so personalized the story of European predation. For this reason alone, *Distant Relations* makes compelling reading.

It is also largely well written, though I believe it would have benefitted from more stringent editing. In a number of places, Freeman's effort to explain the situational details of an event allow the book to become mired in minutia, detracting from its effectiveness and readability.

Nevertheless, it's worth ploughing on through all 467 pages of text, for despite its focus on a single theme, to its end *Distant Relations* displays how extraordinarily creative we are in inventing new tactics and justifications for racism. And, she rightly concludes, "we can't move forward ... until we understand ourselves more deeply, acknowledging and exploring even the darker aspects of our history."

Reviewed by **Barbara Huck**, author of *Exploring the Fur Trade Routes of North America*, which examines a crucial period in Canadian history from a North American perspective.

Glen Norcliffe

Ride to Modernity

The Bicycle in Canada, 1869-1900

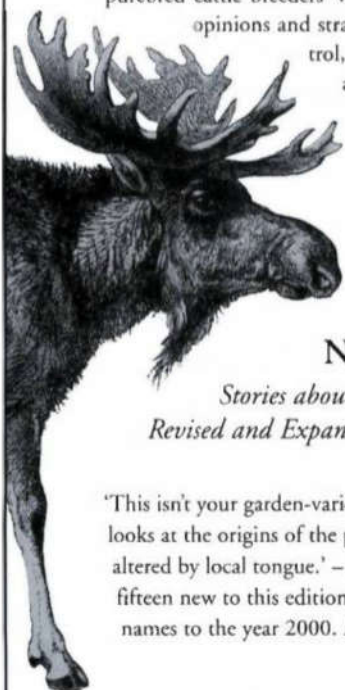
An examination how the bicycle as a symbol of modernity and social status fit into a period of dramatic economic, social, and technological flux and led to a host of technological innovations. *Paper \$24.95. Cloth \$60.00.*

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Just a hundred years ago, the University of Toronto Press began publishing, first imprints for its own internal needs, but soon works for the larger world. Essentially an academic press, much of its output—especially in history, biography, and political science—has rightly gained a wider readership. Some recent UTP releases testify anew how extraordinarily important, indeed essential, is the press to our culture.

Political memoirs are usually written by retired politicians, very public people. In contrast, with his *Memoirs of a Very Civil Servant*, Gordon Robertson reveals another domain—behind the scenes, out of the spotlight, but no less political. Robertson dutifully served (but clearly disliked) Mackenzie King and (more happily) St. Laurent, Pearson, and Trudeau. As a historian, I was appalled by the offhand confession that, after King's death, Robertson helped burn all King's personal notes of all the seances he had sat through. Nonetheless, this private insider's take on four very public lives—and his own life working for them—is an intriguing read. The book recently received the J.W. Dafoe Foundation award for writing in the field of Canadian and international affairs.

Unforeseen Legacies is about not a civil servant but a civil engineer, Reuben Wells Leonard, who made millions from mining ventures. Having done well, he set about doing good. An ardent advocate of Canada's imperial connections, he became one of the country's most generous philanthropists, setting up a half-million-dollar (big money in the 1920s) trust. For sixty years it provided scholarships to Canadian men and (a quarter of them) women. No one thought to challenge its exclusion of benefits to all "who are not Christians of the White Race ... not of British Nationality or of British Parentage, and all who owe allegiance to any Foreign Government, Prince, Pope or Potentate, or who recognize any such authority, temporal or spiritual." Only white British Protestants

need apply! Thanks to a recent Osgoode Society sponsored study, we now know the full story of the man, a classic social Darwinist, and of the legal battles that eventually overturned the prejudicial provisions of his trust—a case of public policy versus private property.

One might be forgiven for assuming that the history of a hospital, even the prestigious Toronto General, would be heavy reading, but one would be wrong. In *Doing Good*, using clear prose, as well as graphs and archival photographs, J.T.H. Connor charts its evolution from a charitable institution that opened in 1829 to care for "sick immigrants and the indigent poor." In spite of a shaky start, by 1870 it was earning praise as a model hospital and today it is numbered among the most eminent in the world. Nevertheless, right from the beginning, the TGH has been plagued with financial woes and with political intervention. A most worthy study.

Another UTP volume, *Selling Themselves: The Emergence of Canadian Advertising*, is a critical, yet appreciative consideration of an occupation that became a profession. A hundred or more years ago, Canadian businesses had products or services to sell and periodical publishers, especially newspapers, had space to fill and need for revenue. Missing was the specialized talent—writers, designers, illustrators, photographers, and others—who could create and effectively place advertising. To meet this need, advertising agencies emerged, inspired (or at least influenced) by changing times, tastes, and techniques from south of the border.

The changes in another profession,

(would you believe?) dentistry, is the subject of another UTP learned treatise, *A Dentist and a Gentleman: Gender and the Rise of Dentistry in Ontario*. Tracy L. Adams traces the transition from a "trade" to one of the "learned professions." In striving to build an image for themselves, dentists actively sought middle-class, white men as new recruits—obvious candidates for the status of "professional gentlemen." A few women also managed to get accepted into dental school, generally speaking, facing fewer barriers than those seeking entrance into medicine or law. Nonetheless, only a few women actually practised as dentists prior to World War I, and they were never "quite equal."

Definitely not a UTP publication is the Canadian history volume in the For Dummies series, *Canadian History for Dummies*. Author Will Ferguson's flip style is ideally suited to such a work. He makes no academic pretensions, of course, but his knowledge of our history is admirably deep and wide. His clear purpose is to inform (rather than impress) the reader. Icons flag recurring themes, outline summaries clarify content, and lively quotations abound. The lack of source citations and a bibliography is partly compensated for with the dozens, indeed hundreds, of pointers to internet sites. Especially useful are quick capsules of controversies surrounding many historical events, with Ferguson nearly always offering his own slant. Its 450 pages make this a far more comprehensive (hence much more useful) volume than the competing *Complete Idiot's Guide* published a few years back. One could take issue with some interpretations, errors, or omissions,

Books Cited

- *Memoirs of a Very Civil Servant: Mackenzie King to Pierre Trudeau*
By Gordon Robertson.
University of Toronto Press, 2000. \$39.95 hardcover.
- *Unforeseen Legacies: Reuben Wells Leonard and the Leonard Foundation Trust*
By Bruce Ziff. University of Toronto Press for the Osgoode Society for Canadian Legal History, 2000. \$75.00 hardcover; \$39.95 paper.
- *Doing Good: The Life of Toronto's General Hospital*
By J.T.H. Connor. University of Toronto Press, 2000. \$60.00 hardcover.
- *Selling Themselves: The Emergence of Canadian Advertising*
By Russell Johnston.
University of Toronto Press, 2001. \$55.00 hardcover.
- *A Dentist and a Gentleman: Gender and the Rise of Dentistry in Ontario*
By Tracey L. Adams. University of Toronto Press, 2000. \$45.00 hardcover.
- *Canadian History for Dummies*
By Will Ferguson. CDG Books Canada, 2000. \$27.99 paper.
- *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Canadian History*
By Ann Douglas. Prentice Hall Canada, 1997. \$19.95 paper.

The Canadian Museum of Civilization (CMC) is Canada's largest and most popular cultural institution, attracting over 1.3 million visitors each year. Designed by Métis architect Douglas Cardinal, the museum is an architectural masterpiece located on the banks of the beautiful Ottawa River in Hull, Quebec, directly across from Parliament Hill.

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- Canadian Museum of Civilization, Hull, QC
- New Brunswick Museum, Saint John
- Yarmouth County Museum, Yarmouth, NS

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but it is a Dummies book. And take heed, the verso of the title page features a boldface, 147-word disclaimer that the publisher and author "make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book," that "the opinions stated herein are not guaranteed or warranted to produce any particular results," and that "neither the publisher nor author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages." Who would have believed Canadian history had such potential! ☒

More Books Worth Noting

From University of Toronto Press

- **Mackenzie King and the Prairie West**
By Robert A. Wardhaugh. University of Toronto Press, 2000. \$55.00 hardcover.

Current Liberal political problems with respect to western Canada, according to this thoughtful historical study, are rooted back in the Depression and in World War II, when major shifts in attitude and policy took place in the governments of Mackenzie King.

- **Ontario Since Confederation: A Reader**
Edited by Edgar-André Montigny and Lori Chambers. University of Toronto Press, 2000. \$70.00 cloth; \$29.95 paper.

A collection of twenty-one scholarly studies, each of which is of interest for its very specific focus, but nearly all requiring broad knowledge of Ontario and Canadian history to be fully appreciated.

And other publishers

- **Boys in the Pits: Child Labour in Coal Mines**
By Robert McIntosh. McGill-Queens University Press, 2000. \$34.95 cloth.

A scholarly study of a surprisingly neglected field of study. The author suggests that our modern view of child labourers as victims may not match their actual experience.

- **Kensington**
By Jean Cochrane, with photographs by Vincenzo Pietropaolo. Boston Mills Press, 2000. \$39.95 cloth.

More than a celebration of Toronto's famous market, a history of a community as old as the city itself – the photos are simply stunning.

- **Losing the Empress: A Personal Journey**
By David Creighton. Dundurn Press, 2000. \$22.99 paper.

Not the terrible history of a disaster, but the moving story of a search for that history related by the grandson of two who died.

- **Mary Janeway: The Legacy of a Home Child**

By Mary Pettit. Natural Heritage Books, 2000. \$19.95 paper.

A fictional account of a real home child separated from her Scottish family and sent to Canada in 1891, the book is closely based on both an understanding of life in rural Ontario at the turn of the century and Mary Janeway's own reminiscences.

- **Polo The Galloping Game: An Illustrated History of Polo in the Canadian West**

By Tony Rees. Western Heritage Centre Society, 2000. \$60.00 cloth.

For more than a century, "hockey on horseback" has been the passion of players in western Canada, as this thoroughly researched and lavishly illustrated volume ably demonstrates.

- **Rites of Passage: A Canadian Railway Retrospective**

By Greg McDonnell. Boston Mills Press, 2000. \$49.95 cloth.

This very personal memoir, the latest work by Canada's (North America's?) foremost railroad historian/photographer, will delight every railway buff – the rest of us can simply enjoy the fine colour photos.

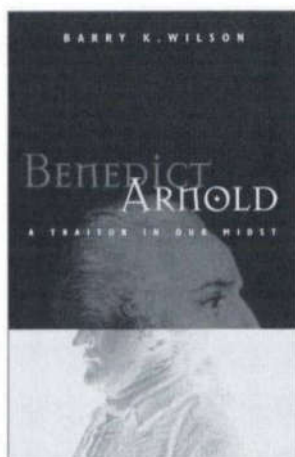
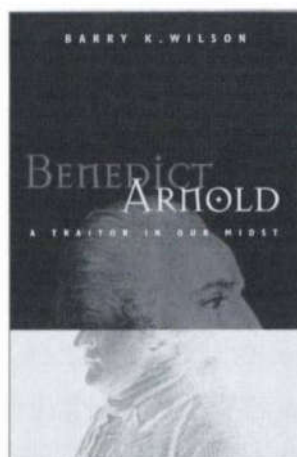
- **Rosedale**

By Bess Hillery Crawford. Boston Mills Press, 2000. \$49.95 cloth.

An attractive and affectionate history of an area of Toronto, once a Family Compact family's country estate built to escape the foul air of "Muddy York." Later subdivided as the city's first suburb, it now is in the centre of the metropolis – and the elite still live there.

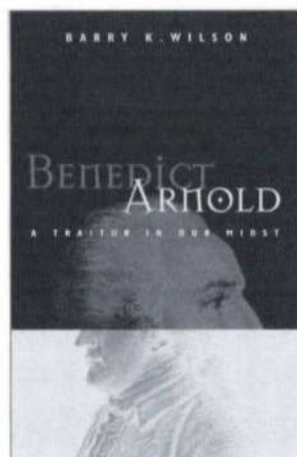
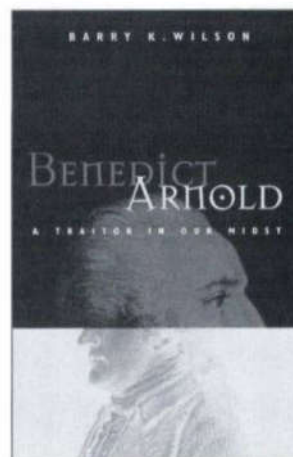
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Edited by Ruth Russell. Natural Heritage Books, 2000. \$25.00 paper.

This attractive book pays tribute to some remarkable women and gives a human face to Ontario history in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.



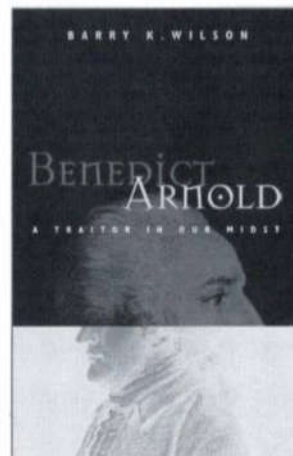
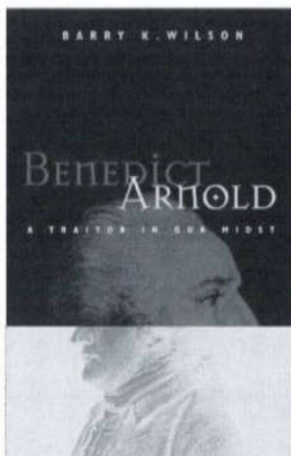
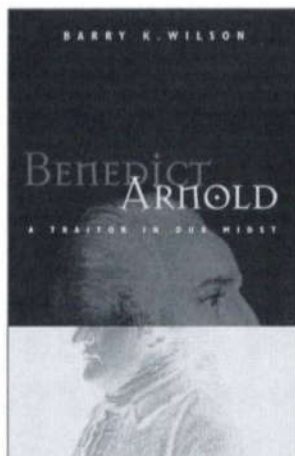
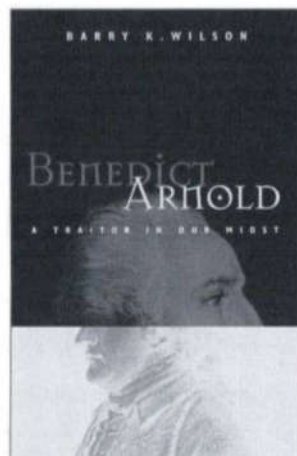
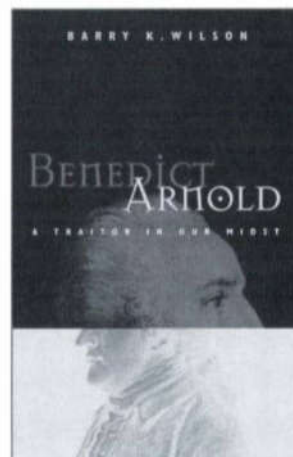
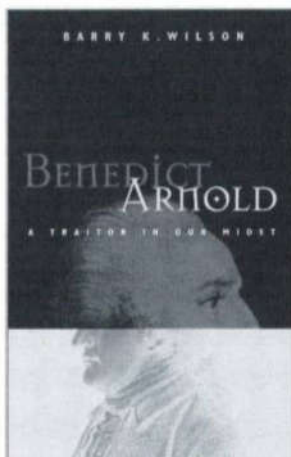
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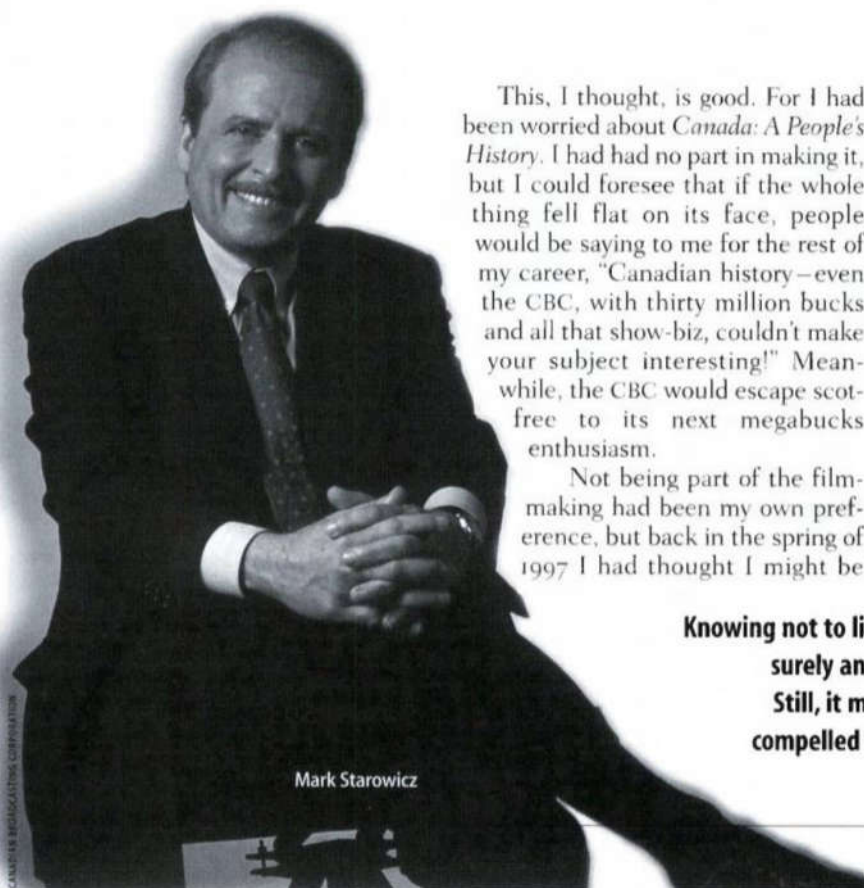
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Coffee With Mark Starowicz



Mark Starowicz

This, I thought, is good. For I had been worried about *Canada: A People's History*. I had had no part in making it, but I could foresee that if the whole thing fell flat on its face, people would be saying to me for the rest of my career, "Canadian history—even the CBC, with thirty million bucks and all that show-biz, couldn't make your subject interesting!" Meanwhile, the CBC would escape scot-free to its next megabucks enthusiasm.

Not being part of the filmmaking had been my own preference, but back in the spring of 1997 I had thought I might be

authority radiated from him. Better dressed and better informed than the film-school types who attended him, he had a passion for the work stronger than theirs too. His vigour and intellect kept us on our toes for two long days, and he loved to talk and argue.

There was a lot to argue about. Among the outsiders, no one was much taken with the CBC's series outline. It seemed to all of us a very conventional History 101, proceeding in sliced-salami chronological segments down to the present like a series of classroom lectures. We wanted structure. We wanted point-of-view. We wanted to know what ideas and argu-

Knowing not to listen too closely to his advisory panels was surely an important part of Starowicz's success. ...

Still, it makes me wonder that filmmakers still feel compelled to create and display [them] in the credits when they make films about history.

I know the precise moment I came around to *Canada: A People's History*. It happened while I was watching our daughters watching it. Boy, did they watch it. Forced to choose, our elder daughter, eleven, would take *A People's History* over *Malcolm in the Middle*. While it was on, she would not be removed from in front of the television. She followed it all closely, and talked about it afterwards.

quite deeply involved. A big, ambitious series about Canadian history seemed to me a great idea, and I was glad to be invited to some of the project's earliest planning sessions.

The CBC had assembled a substantial team for these sessions: partners like the National Film Board, as well as individual writers. But it was Mark Starowicz, the CBC's head of documentary film, who dominated. It was his show and his budget, and

ments and themes the series would have. We wanted to know what this program believed about Canadian history and how it would tell its story.

Starowicz parried and countered and let no vague assertion slip by, but we were making our case. By the end, it seemed that we had demolished the CBC team's first-draft outline. I had never doubted the cinematography of the series would be first-rate, its technology leading-edge, its sets and the Canadian landscapes breathtaking. But, as things were, it needed ideas: a sense of where the story should go,

and how it would make its way there.

The CBC kept in touch, and in late summer, I was invited down to the Broadcast Centre. Three of us had coffee in Starowicz's comfortable office, its ledges lined with Geminis.

I was eager to see what fresh start Starowicz was contemplating. Again the talk was friendly, intense, and vigorous. But to my surprise, it was all the same things as in May: the same outline, the same anecdotes, and the same confidence. I began to see that, no matter how much Starowicz and his team had enjoyed all our repartee back in May, they had barely absorbed a thing. They were still working on the same handful of story ideas, still learning for themselves.

It seemed to me they urgently needed someone who could mix knowledge of the historical details with a sense of structure, someone who could work hand in hand with the producers, directors, and researchers. I asked who their writer was, but from their puzzled answers, I grasped that in television "writers" are minor technical assistants who polish up narration and dialogue in the last stages. I asked who their historian was. Starowicz said sincerely he could not see what he could get from having a historian on his team that he could not get in a couple of hours of conversation over a beer or two.

I had already had my two hours. We went on talking, but my time at the CBC was up. I walked away, and while I've talked with Mark Starowicz a few times since, I declined all further involvement with his series.

For a while, I felt like the only historian in Canada who was not involved. The CBC made much of the panels of experts and consultants who would guarantee the integrity of *Canada: A People's History*. And it seemed every historian I met had had at least a few phone calls from the project, and some fancied their roles to be vital.

But influence? I could not see much sign of it in the finished film. Indeed, the "story" in *Canada: A People's History* was startlingly old-fashioned, built around great men and dramatized battles wreathed in black-powder smoke. The film simply dropped most of the nuance and qualification and debate that historians left to them-

selves tend to emphasize and enjoy.

And that, of course, proved to be the great strength of *Canada: A People's History*. Starowicz had seen the great virtue of Keeping It Simple. The formulas he had started with proved to be a pretty good frame for his storytelling, and he never allowed himself to be distracted by too much sophistication. (So I thought the few moments the film devoted to mid-nineteenth century Irish immigrants went quite well, but the expert they had consulted despaired to see it go for every stereotype he warned them against.) And while the great old story may be familiar to specialists, it is forever new and compelling to a vast audience of Canadians (whose dedication to and interest in this country's own stories we consistently underestimate). Just ask my daughters.

Knowing not to listen too closely to his advisory panels was surely an important part of Starowicz's success. There seems to have been no significant writers in his team, and no historians either, but there is certainly an author. *Canada: A People's History* may be Professor Starowicz's History 101, but he's a smart, versatile, passionate guy. He found a point of view and stuck to it, and he makes a pretty effective lecturer.

Still, it makes me wonder about those advisory boards and professorial panels that filmmakers still feel compelled to create and display in the credits and the promotion when they make films about history. Good science journalism like *The Nature of Things* does not need a panel of professors to prove its gravitas. Political journalists would not think they need a certificate of approval from scholars of government. There's an odd wobble of confidence about a historical film that says, "This is all absolutely right because I signed up a panel of experts."

Filmmakers should make their own history films and stand by them. And historians don't need to lend their names to history programs unless they actually participate in shaping them. ■

Canada: A People's History will resume Sunday, September 30 on CBC with eight new episodes. The first season will be replayed beginning Thursday, August 16. See <cbc.ca/history> for further information.

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Album

Charles R. Bateman, who submitted this photograph to the *Beaver*, is the grandson of Charles Sulman. He lives in Waterloo, Ontario, and still has possession of his grandfather's mahogany bowls.

Antebellum It's Thursday, July 30, 1914. In five days time, England will declare war on Germany, taking Canada with her, and the pacific nineteenth century, which has lingered well past its sell-by date into a golden Edwardian twilight, will vanish in a new, savage warfare of peoples. Who knows what sadnesses the people in this picture will endure as their sons and brothers go off to fight in the trenches of France. But all that is to come. It's a pleasant summer's eve in Belleville, Ontario. Archduke Ferdinand's assassination in Sarajevo a month ago is already old news. Mobilization may be sweeping like a tide through the empires of Europe, but if there's to be war, it will all be over by Christmas. Oh, surely. There are more immediate things to consider. Lawn bowling for instance. Charles Nelson Sulman, mayor of Belleville from 1905 to 1907, and the proprietor of The Bee-

hive, a Belleville dry-goods store, is keen on the game. Surrounded by other members of the Belleville lawn-bowling club and their smartly turned-out wives, he observes carefully while the distance of his bowl from the "jack"—the small white ball proximity to which is the bowler's objective—is measured. Is his bowl closer? Or that of another gentleman? We'll never know.

In the 1920s, Sulman will go on to play against touring South African bowling teams. He will sell The Beehive in 1928 and put his money into stocks. The market will crash the following year, but he will carry on, as so many did. The war to end all wars will engender another war. Three years after that war ends, Charles Nelson Sulman will pass away.

☒



Do you have an old photograph that captures a moment, important or ordinary, in our country's history? If you would like to submit it for possible publication, have it copied at your local photo shop (please don't send priceless originals) and send it to: Album, c/o *The Beaver*, #478-167 Lombard Ave., Winnipeg, MB, R3B 0T6. Include a brief description of the photo, including its date and location. If possible, identify people in the photograph and provide further information about the event or situation illustrated. To have your copy returned, please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

HISTORY

TELEVISION



EASTERN	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY				
7:00 AM	GREAT TRAIN STORIES					THE BEST OF CANADA	THE BEST OF CANADA				
7:30 AM											
8:00 AM	IT SEEMS LIKE YESTERDAY										
8:30 AM	THE WAY WE WERE					CANADIAN HISTORY	THE 20TH CENTURY				
9:00 AM	SKETCHES OF OUR TOWN										
9:30 AM	HISTORY BITES										
10:00 AM	A SCATTERING OF SEEDS										
10:30 AM	HISTORYLANDS					ANCIENT HISTORY	HISTORY OF WAR				
11:00 AM	THE UNTOUCHABLES										
11:30 AM	GREAT TRAIN STORIES										
12:00 PM	GREAT TRAIN STORIES					DOC SERIES (NON-WAR)	DOC SERIES (WAR)				
12:30 PM											
1:00 PM											
1:30 PM	HISTORY ON FILM										
2:00 PM						WESTERN MATINEE	HISTORY ON FILM				
2:30 PM											
3:00 PM	HISTORY BITES										
3:30 PM	HISTORY BITES					DRAMA	DOC SERIES (WAR)				
4:00 PM	DESTINATION: HISTORY										
4:30 PM											
5:00 PM	COMBAT					BEST OF BRITISH HISTORY	THE CANADIANS				
5:30 PM											
6:00 PM	GREAT TRAIN STORIES										
6:30 PM	TOUR OF DUTY					THE CANADIANS	THE BEST OF THE NEW				
7:00 PM											
7:30 PM	PEOPLE'S CENTURY										
8:00 PM						A SCATTERING OF SEEDS	THE BEST OF THE NEW				
8:30 PM						HISTORYLANDS					
9:00 PM	20TH CENTURY MONDAYS	ANCIENT HISTORY TUESDAYS	CANADIAN HISTORY WEDNESDAYS	HISTORY OF WAR THURSDAYS	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM				
9:30 PM											
10:00 PM											
10:30 PM	TOUR OF DUTY				HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM				
11:00 PM											
11:30 PM											
12:00 AM	20TH CENTURY MONDAYS	ANCIENT HISTORY TUESDAYS	CANADIAN HISTORY WEDNESDAYS	HISTORY OF WAR THURSDAYS	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM				
12:30 AM											
1:00 AM											
1:30 AM					HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM	HISTORY ON FILM				
2:00 AM	TOUR OF DUTY										
2:30 AM											
3:00 AM	A CENTURY OF CONFLICT					BEST OF BRITISH HISTORY	THE BEST OF THE NEW				
3:30 AM											
4:00 AM	PEOPLE'S CENTURY										
4:30 AM						WESTERN MOVIE	THE BEST OF THE NEW				
5:00 AM	COMBAT						DOC SERIES (WAR)				
5:30 AM							CABLE IN THE CLASSROOM				
6:00 AM	A CENTURY OF CONFLICT										
6:30 AM											

*All programming is subject to change.



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